

Public Document Pack

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To: Cllr Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Helen Brown, Geoff Collett, David Cox, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Brian Lloyd and Kevin Rush

3 February 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING
COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY, 2022 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

Gareth Owens
Chief Officer (Governance)

Please note: This will be a remote meeting and 'attendance' will be restricted to Committee Members and those Members of Council who have asked the Head of Democratic Services for an invitation. Such attendees may only speak at the Chair's discretion.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire-public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

A G E N D A

1 **APOLOGIES**

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 8)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January, 2022.

4 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** (Pages 9 - 18)

Report of Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

5 **HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME (HSP) STRATEGY 2022/2026** (Pages 19 - 104)

Report of Chief Executive - Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To consult Members on the approach being taken to ensure delivery and implementation of the Housing Support Programme Strategy for Flintshire ahead of the implementation date of 1st April 2022.

6 **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION HOMELESSNESS AUDIT 2021 FINDINGS REPORT** (Pages 105 - 134)

Report of Chief Executive - Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To share the findings of the recent audit of Temporary Accommodation which forms part of the Councils Homelessness function along with the "management response" and action plan for service improvement.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public interest in withholding the information outweighs the interest in disclosing the information until such time as the commercial arrangements have been finalised.

7 **NEW HOMES BUSINESS PLAN** (Pages 135 - 152)

Report of Chief Executive - Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To consider the NEW Homes Business Plan

Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours

Procedural Note on the conduct of meetings

The Chair will open the meeting and introduce themselves.

The meeting will be attended by a number of Councillors. Officers will also be in attendance to present reports, with Democratic Services officers acting as hosts of the meeting.

All attendees are asked to ensure their mobile phones are switched off and that any background noise is kept to a minimum.

All microphones are to be kept muted during the meeting and should only be unmuted when invited to speak by the Chair. When invitees have finished speaking they should go back on mute.

To indicate to speak, Councillors will use the chat facility or use the electronic raise hand function. The chat function may also be used for questions, relevant comments and officer advice and updates.

The Chair will call the speakers, with elected Members addressed as 'Councillor' and officers addressed by their job title e.g. Chief Executive' or name. From time to time, the officer advising the Chair will explain procedural points or suggest alternative wording for proposals, to assist the Committee.

If and when a vote is taken, the Chair will explain that only those who oppose the proposal(s), or who wish to abstain will need to indicate, using the chat function. The officer advising the Chair will indicate whether the proposals are carried.

If a more formal vote is needed, this will be by roll call – where each Councillor will be asked in turn (alphabetically) how s/he wishes to vote

At County Council and Planning Committee meetings speaker's times are limited. A bell will be sounded to alert that the speaker has one minute remaining

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **12 JANUARY 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Wednesday, 12 January 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Helen Brown, Geoff Collett, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Dennis Hutchinson Kevin Rush, Brian Lloyd

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Ray Hughes

SUBSTITUTES:

Councillor David Wisinger (for Councillor David Cox)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Patrick Heesom attended as an observer

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Dave Hughes (Cabinet Member for Housing); Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value); Chief Executive, Principal Accountant, Strategic Finance Manager - Commercial and Housing and Strategic Performance Advisor

IN ATTENDANCE: Community & Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Electoral Services Officer

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

36. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillor Ron Davies and Councillor Kevin Rush.

The Chairman recorded his thanks to Councillor Helen Brown for chairing the meeting in his absence.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. She referred to the February meeting and reported that the Internal Audit report on temporary accommodation would be added to the list of

items to be considered at the meeting. On the action tracking report she confirmed that there had been no actions arising from the last meeting.

Councillor Helen Brown asked if a report on Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) properties and best use of housing stock could be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. The Chief Executive supported this suggestion and it was agreed that this be included on the Forward Work Programme.

The recommendations outlined within the report were moved and seconded by Councillor Helen Brown and Councillor Brian Lloyd.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

38. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 30 YEAR FINANCIAL BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee received a report to consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022/23 and the draft HRA 30 year Financial Business Plan. The Chief Executive and Strategic Finance Manager (Commercial and Housing) gave a presentation covering:

- Borrowing
- Rents
- Garage Rents
- Service Charges
- Capital Programme
- Regeneration
- SHARP
- Capital Funding
- Reserves
- Resource Implications (including re-structure to cover work pressures)
- Impact Assessment & Risk Management
- Ways of Working (Sustainable Development)
- Well-being Goals Impact

The rent increase proposed in the business plan, applied an overall uplift of 1.18% to all tenants and, in addition, applied the transitional uplift of £2 to tenants who currently pay at least £3 under target rent which equates to an overall rent increase of 2% as set out in the Business Plan.

The proposed garage rent and garage plot increase was 2% for 2022/23, which equated to £0.20 per week for garage rent and took the rent per week to £10.23 (based on 52 weeks).

On Service Charges, it was proposed that these increases were frozen again in 2022/23 due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and during 2022/23 further work would be undertaken to ensure services provided were of high standard, represented value for money and that the true costs were reflected in the service charges calculations.

Councillor Helen Brown asked if a breakdown of the rent and garage rent charges in £'s and pence could be provided for the Committee. The Strategic Finance Manager (Commercial and Housing) explained that this information would differ for each tenant but she could provide an average for tenants to the Committee following the meeting.

Members spoke in support of the work being undertaken around garage plots, as detailed as part of the presentation.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillor Ron Davies and Councillor Helen Brown.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year Financial Business Plan & Budget for 2022/23 as presented within the report and appendices.

39. COUNCIL PLAN 2022/23

The Chief Executive presented the draft 2022/23 Council Plan which had been reviewed and refreshed following the response to the pandemic and Recovery Strategy. The themes and priorities remained the same as 2021/22, however there were some development within the sub-priorities.

The structure of the Plan continued to be aligned to a set of six Well-being Objectives and the six themes continued to take a long term view of recovery, ambition and work over the next two years. The outlined of the Council Plan for 2022/23 including the six themes, their priorities and actions were appended to the report.

The Strategic Performance Advisor advised that all comments and suggestions would be collated and shared with Cabinet in advance of approval for adoption in June 2022.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillor Helen Brown and Councillor Brian Lloyd.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the content of the themes for the Council Plan 2022-23 as presented within the report and appendix.

40. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.28 a.m.)

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Chairman



COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 9 February 2022
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Community Housing & Assets OSC.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. Contact Officer: Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator Telephone: 01352 702305 E-mail: ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
Wednesday 9 March 2022	Meeting Cancelled				
Page 13	Housing Rent Income - Year end outturn and latest position for 2022/23	To provide the Year end outturn for 2021/22 and an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels for 2022/23.	Monitoring Assurance	Revenues Manager	
	Welfare Reform Update	To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire Residents.	Monitoring Assurance	Benefits Manager	
	Communal Heating Charges 2022/23	To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2022/23 prior to Cabinet approval.	Consultation	Corporate Finance - Accountant	
Wednesday 6 July 2022	Year-end Performance Indicators for Recovery, Portfolio and Public Accountability Measures	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)	

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Items to be scheduled

- **Sheltered Housing Review** – Reports to be submitted to Committee meetings as appropriate as agreed at the Committee meeting held on 4th November, 2020.
- **Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) System Update** – Update reports to be submitted annually to the Committee starting September 2022 following implementation on the new system, as agreed at the Committee meeting held on 23rd February, 2021
- **De-carbonisation Strategy** – Briefing session to be arranged for Members to enable a better understanding of the De-Carbonisation Strategy, when appropriate.
- **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs)** – Request from Councillor Helen Brown supported by the Committee for report to be brought to a future meeting on DFGs and the best use of housing stock.

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	Performance Reporting	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Six monthly	Welfare Reform Update – including Universal Credit	To update Members on the impact of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.	Benefits Manager
Six monthly	Update on North East Wales Homes & Property Management	To update Members on the work of the North East Wales Homes & Property Management	Housing Strategy Manager
Annually – September 15	WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery review update	To provide an update on progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), that the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme. Report to include information around the use of local labour and number of apprentices and school leavers.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Six monthly	Update on Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on rent collection and current arrear levels	Revenues Manager

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ACTION TRACKING FOR THE COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
12.01.2022	4. Forward Work Programme	As suggested at the meeting, the following report be added for the 9 th February, 2022 meeting:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit – Homelessness 	Ceri Shotton / Martin Cooil	Item added for consideration on Agenda for 09.02.2022 Committee meeting.	Completed.
12.01.2022	4. Forward Work Programme	Cllr Helen Brown asked if a report on Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) properties and best use of housing stock could be brought to a future meeting. This suggestion was supported by the Committee.	Ceri Shotton / Jen Griffiths	Item added to Forward Work Programme under 'Items to be scheduled'.	Completed.
12.01.2022	5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Financial Business	Cllr Helen Brown asked if a breakdown of the rent and garage rent charges in £'s and pence could be provided for the Committee. Rachael Corbelli explained that this information would differ for each tenant but could provide an average for tenants to the Committee following the meeting.	Rachael Corbelli	Information circulated to Committee Members via e-mail on 25.01.2022.	Completed.

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 9 th February 2022
Report Subject	Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy 2022/2026
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy requirements and the approach taken in Flintshire to develop and adopt the HSP Strategy by the end of March 2022. The HSP Strategy is attached for final review along with details for delivery and monitoring of the HSP Strategy and supporting Action Plan for the period 2022-2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the work undertaken to date in developing the HSP Strategy for Flintshire ahead of the deadline for adopting the HSP Strategy (31 st March 2022)
2	To provide comments and observations on the HSP Strategy (attached as Appendix 1) ahead of formal consideration by Cabinet.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT (HSG) AND THE HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY
1.01	Background to the Housing Support Programme Strategy Welsh Government now require Local Authorities to develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy every four years, with a mid-point review every two years. The HSP Strategy should outline the strategic direction of the local authority for housing related support services. This

	<p>should provide a single strategic view of the local authority’s approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services. As such, it would include both statutory homelessness functions funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the Housing Support Grant (HSG).</p> <p>Local authorities must ensure the Strategy, as the single strategic document on housing support and homelessness prevention, also satisfies the existing statutory requirements for a homelessness strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. There is no requirement to produce a separate strategy. Effectively the current Homelessness Strategy (North Wales Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2022: People, homes and services “A regional approach to tackling homelessness in North Wales” – see accessible document 6.01) comes to an end 9 months early and will be replaced by the new HSP Strategy which will run April 2022 – March 2026.</p> <p>The HSP Strategy should take into account how it can support delivery of the Welsh Government’s vision and aims for the prevention of homelessness and the transformational shift required to move to a rapid re-housing approach. Welsh Government guidance on the development of the HSP Strategy has been issued through a number of national briefings and workshops and detailed guidance has been issued (Appendix 2).</p>
1.02	<p>Background to the Housing Support Grant</p> <p>In April 2019 Welsh Government introduced the new Housing Support Grant (HSG). This is an early intervention housing related support programme targeted at people in housing need and at increased risk of homelessness. The HSG programme brings the historic funding streams for Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales grants into one single funding stream.</p> <p>For several years, there had been a standstill budget with Flintshire receiving £5,950,818 each year. In an effort to bolster resources for this agenda, Welsh Government announced a further £40m would be put into the national award for HSG for 2021-2022 onwards. Flintshire have since received an annual award of £7,828,610. This is a significant increase of £1,877,792 and reflects the priority that Welsh Government place on this funding stream and the importance of housing related support and the prevention of homelessness. Recent announcement of a 3 year settlement for this funding stream enables longer term planning and again supports ongoing commitment to this area of work as we focus on recovery from the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Additional services have been identified for Flintshire and activity undertaken to mobilise increased service delivery through this additional funding. However significant workforce challenges and other operational issue sees Flintshire and many other Council’s in a position where they are projecting underspends on this year’s increased allocation (2021/2022). Welsh Government accept that this has been a transitional year but require the development of the HSP Strategy and annual delivery plan to ensure the additional resources are targeted and fully utilised at the local level.</p>

1.03

Current Housing Support Grant Services

Examples of services delivered by Flintshire County Council and commissioned through other housing support partners include but not limited to:

Supported Housing

A range of supported housing for those people who require short to medium term housing and intensive support (up to two years). Services and accommodation made available for a range of household types, singles, couples, families. Examples but not limited to:

- Plas Belin Family Supported Housing Scheme (Local Solutions)
- Llys Emlyn young persons Supported Housing (Clwyd Alyn)

Refuge Accommodation

Male and Female Refuge provision for those fleeing domestic abuse and needing access to specialist support and safe accommodation.

Example but not limited to:

- Male Refuge (Domestic Abuse Service Unit)
- Women & Children Refuge (Clwyd Alyn Women's Aid)

Emergency Bed Provision

The Homeless Hub in Queensferry is run by The Wallich and provides temporary accommodation and support with a range of partners accessing the Homeless Hub in order to engage with residents. Many of these residents often struggle to sustain engagement for a variety of reasons associated with the complexity of their needs and vulnerabilities.

Tenancy Related Support

Short term Housing related support and advice services that help people set up and sustain their tenancies across social and private rented sector properties. This can assist people with a wide range of housing issues to prevent these escalating to a risk of homelessness. Examples include but not limited to:

- CBASS Community Based Accommodation Support Service for Older People (Flintshire Council)
- Generic Tenancy Support (Shelter Cymru)
- Offender Focused Housing Support (Kaleidoscope)

Financial Inclusion & Debt Advice Services

Access to timely financial inclusion and debt advice is an important intervention when considering risks to homelessness which are often related to rent arrears and other household debt issues. With significant strain on various debt services and often lengthy waiting times it is important that we have a fast track route into services for people with housing related debts. Examples include:

- Specialist Debt Advisor linked to Housing & Prevention Service (Flintshire Council)
- Specialist Debt Caseworker (Flintshire Citizens Advice)

Housing First

An intensive support service, targeted at people with highly complex needs and often with a significant history of rough sleeping. Elected Members from the Community Housing & Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	<p>received a briefing about the roll out of Housing First in January 2021 and the service will be developed further in 2022 onwards.</p>
<p>1.04</p>	<p>Developing the Housing Support Programme Strategy Local Authorities are required to identify local needs and ensure that resources are targeted at areas of growing need and demand. The needs analysis pulls on specific data sets relevant to housing related support such as service requests via the Housing Support Gateway (the single point of access for Housing Support) and other data such as homeless presentations, Citizens Advice Gateway, Domestic Abuse referrals etc.</p> <p>Consultation with service users and with local stakeholders who deliver services and support people to access Housing Support is also drawn upon to inform our needs analysis. A number of consultation activities have informed the development of the HSP Strategy and are outlined within Section 4 of this report.</p> <p>A robust needs assessment is also required and will bring together a number of existing data sets along with local service demand information. This data will drive the detailed work within the action plan and priorities for the HSP Strategy along with informing the Spend Plan for Housing Support Grant. High Levels Needs Assessments and data sets to be referenced within the Strategy will include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population Needs Assessment • Local Authority Wellbeing Assessment • Homelessness statistics and other housing data such as waiting lists • Welsh index of multiple deprivation • Regional VAWDASV needs assessment • Housing Support Grant Outcomes data • Needs data from providers, gateway panels • Unmet needs data over the 12 months from providers, homelessness reviews <p>A detailed Project Plan was developed to ensure the successful delivery of the HSP Strategy within deadline. Key milestones include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final draft in place by end December 2021 and submitted to Welsh Government • Feedback from Welsh Government expected mid-January 2022 • Final Strategy to be signed off by cabinet by end of February 2022. <p>Once finalised and approved by Cabinet the HSP Strategy and Statement of Need must be published on the local authority website and available in both Welsh and English.</p>
<p>1.05</p>	<p>HSP Strategy Vision, Principles and Priorities Adopting a vision for the strategy provides a clear focus for all partners in terms of our shared ambition to tackle homelessness and housing related support issues. A vision should be bold and ambitious and set a clear aspiration for the future that inspires action. Flintshire’s HSP Strategy vision is:</p>

“Ending homelessness, overcoming housing problems and delivering person centred support that meets the needs of people in Flintshire, through partnership working and early intervention”

In delivering this vision the following core principles will be adopted by the Council and its partners:

- *We will ensure that all Council services are committed to ending homelessness in Flintshire*
- *We will work with partners to prevent homelessness, and where it cannot be prevented we will ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeated*
- *We will support the people of Flintshire to live healthy and independent lives within safe homes and resilient communities*
- *We will deliver quality support services that are person centred and are informed through service user involvement*
- *We will promote honesty, respect and dignity between the people who deliver our services and the people who benefit from our services*
- *We will celebrate the successes of our services and invest in our workforce to deliver the highest levels of support*
- *We will work with partners across the North Wales region on shared challenges and where opportunities for collaboration arise*

Following analysis of the Needs Assessment and service user and service provider feedback, the following priority areas have been identified to provide focus when delivering the HSP Strategy. The Action Plan supporting the Strategy captures the high level tasks required to deliver against these priority areas.

- *Priority 1 – Adopting Early Intervention and Targeted Prevention Activities*
- *Priority 2 – Strengthening Person Centred Approaches and Responding to Complex Needs*
- *Priority 3 – Developing the TrACE Agenda*
- *Priority 4 – Supporting Workforce Development and Resilience*
- *Priority 5 – Reviewing and improving Flintshire’s Housing Offer*
- *Priority 6 – Moving towards a “Rapid Rehousing” approach*

1.06

HSP Strategy Local Action Plan

The additional funding for 2022 onwards and the development of the HSP Strategy provides a significant opportunity to enhance the current housing support and homeless prevention offer for Flintshire. It is also important to ensure resources and collective focus across partners is coordinated and delivers on the Local Delivery Plan Priorities. Detailed below are some of the additional activities and service enhancements that will be delivered for 2022 and beyond and captured through the Action Plan

Early Intervention and Preventative Approaches

The additional funding enables increased capacity within local housing support related services. Whilst this is positive and provides more intensive support to be targeted at people at risk of homelessness and those struggling to live independently, there also needs to be a clear commitment from all services working within Flintshire to deliver services that enable people to have a good quality of life and reduce poverty, hardship and in turn mitigate risks related to housing and homelessness services.

Exploring the potential for a Young Persons Homeless Hub

Flintshire aim to develop a Young Persons Homeless Hub with self-contained temporary supported accommodation, providing the opportunity for young people to develop independent living skills and lay the foundation for positive tenancies in adulthood. This facility could also provide open access to a range of other housing support and young person services under one roof. Model to be developed further. No location identified.

Homeless Hub - Emergency Bed Provision

There is a need to develop an alternative to the current Homeless Hub at Glanrafon in Queensferry. Whilst it is necessary to sustain the current 24/7 delivery model at Glanrafon and support people onto alternative forms of longer term housing, there will continue to be a need for emergency housing. The future offer will however need to ensure a range of self-contained accommodation is available along with a multi-agency support model that builds on the lessons learnt service delivery during the Covid pandemic. No site for this provision has been identified.

Opening up the Private Rented Sector

Limited social housing, increasing demand, and lengthier waiting times, mean that supporting people to access the private rental sector is more important than ever. Having dedicated officers working with landlords, letting agencies and prospective private renters to remove barriers to securing a privately rented home in Flintshire will support the move towards a “rapid rehousing approach” and seek to increase the supply of affordable homes across all tenures.

Additional training, welfare and support for frontline staff

It is important there is an acknowledgement that responding to the current and future demand for housing support and homelessness services is a significant challenge. Investing in the people who deliver these critical services will be important to ensure the workforce is skilled, resilient and ready for the challenges ahead. A range of training, development and support across all service providers, along with attractive terms and conditions will ensure the sector can retain and attract an appropriately skilled workforce.

Developing a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Welsh Government have identified the need to move to a “Rapid Rehousing” approach to enable people to exit homelessness promptly. Within the broader vision to ensure homelessness is “rare, brief and non-

	<p>repeated” all Councils will need to develop local plans that identify how services will be transformed and enable the “Rapid Rehousing Model”. This approach encompasses the Housing First model and ensures that not only are outcomes for homeless people “housing led”, but that tailored packages of support enable people to sustain their housing without instances of repeat homelessness.</p>
<p>1.07</p>	<p>Regional Working North Wales Local Authorities have previously worked together to adopt the North Wales Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2022: People, homes and services “A regional approach to tackling homelessness in North Wales” Accessible Document 6.01)</p> <p>Whilst each Local Authority is now adopting their own HSP Strategy for 2022-2026, there remains a clear commitment to joint working across the region. Partnership working through the development of the HSP Strategies has been incredibly positive and North Wales continues to be respected for it’s joined up activities and collaborative working by Welsh Government and other regions.</p> <p>Forums such as the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG) continue to push for opportunities to collaborate and share best practice and resources and the RHSCG has identified regional priorities for its work plan. Within the HSG guidance regional working is categorised as:</p> <p>Cat 1) Development of specialist services for which there is not a critical mass locally Cat 2) Development of regional services where justified by economies of scale Cat 3) Delivery of improvements to be achieved by collaboration Cat 4) Collaboration with other public services.</p> <p>What are the RHSCG regional priority areas for 2021-22 onwards</p> <p>Cat 1: Development of specialist services for which there is not a critical mass locally. Our North Wales service user feedback questionnaire and the local authority HSG housing needs assessment data will highlight gaps in service provision. Priorities under this category to be progressed through the RHSCG for 2021/22 onwards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional LGBTQ+ training • LGBTQ+ regional project / dispersed unit • Regional hoarding project • Explore a regional dispersed unit / refuge for male survivors of domestic abuse <p>Cat 2: Development of regional services where justified by economies of scale The RHSCG will continue funding the Phase 2 regional project commissioned jointly with the area planning board for the North Wales Collaborative Outreach service. The RHSCG has also agreed to contribute for another year to the jointly commissioned Independent Domestic Violence Advisors with the VAWDASV funding and OPCC.</p>

Another years funding has also been committed for target hardening and has increased in some local authorities. The RHSCG in unison with the VAWDASV commissioning group will explore the potential for a regional dual diagnosis domestic abuse refuge.

Cat 3: Delivery of improvements to be achieved by collaboration

The RHSCG will continue to build links where a housing support is an element of another regional agenda and ensure there is collaboration and partnership working at a regional level to deliver improvements to services. Bespoke training will be explored by the RHSCG for our Housing Support Grant providers, specifically looking at Mental Health First Aid training. The HSG leads will be exploring for the RHSCG how we can ensure services are operating a psychologically informed environment approach. This is essentially a culture shift we are prioritising to embed trauma informed provision. The RHSCG will continue to have Rapid Rehousing as a standard agenda item going forward. It is crucial we use this platform to share local authority knowledge in progressing towards Rapid Rehousing Hubs across North Wales.

Cat 4: Collaboration with other public services.

The RHSCG will continue to improve links with the RPB and other regional boards / partnerships where there is a housing linkage / agenda. RHSCG Vice Chair Sam Parry, Housing Services Manager for Conwy County Borough Council is the local authority housing rep at North Wales RPB.

The RHSCG will continue to formalise line of communication related to regional working. We need to make better connections with health and probation at the RHSCG to ensure the housing related agenda has formalised links and a communication pathway to address current issues.

A detailed work plan will be available at each RHSCG meeting addressing progression against the priorities, listed these are:

- Regional LGBTQ+ Training
- LGBTQ+ Regional Project / Dispersed Unit
- Regional Mental Health First Aid Training
- Regional Hoarding Project
- Regional Dispersed Unit / refuge for Male survivors of domestic abuse
- Explore potential for a regional Dual Diagnosis Domestic Abuse Refuge
- Explore regional opportunity to embed Psychological Trauma Informed approach
- Rapid Rehousing

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p><u>Developing the HSP Strategy</u></p> <p>The development of the Strategy sits with the Housing & Prevention Service. Engagement with service users, service providers and other public sector and third sector partners is key to ensuring that we not only listen to the experiences of people on the front line, but also gain buy in</p>

	from services and extended partners through a clear acknowledgement that housing support and homelessness is a shared agenda.
2.02	<p><u>Delivering on the HSP Strategy</u> Detailed below are the cost implications associated with the delivery of Housing Support Programme Strategy in Flintshire for 2022-2026:</p> <p>Revenue: The Housing Support Grant award is usually shared with Council's annually in December. The Welsh Government have now given a 3 year allocation award for 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25.</p> <p>Capital: Whilst HSG is a revenue grant, there are implications for Capital expenditure. Some services need to be delivered from specific housing settings and there will be a need to identify and potentially build new accommodation that will meet the needs of people who experience homeless. Both the Emergency Bed Provision and the Young Persons Homeless Hub referenced in Section 1.04 of this report will require significant capital investment and have been flagged early with in the Councils Capital Programme and Housing Prospectus which have been approved by the Council.</p> <p>Human Resources: The additional HSG funding provides an opportunity to increase capacity across a range of services and some of this additional capacity will be fulfilled through the Councils recruitment process. Despite the appetite to increase the workforce both internally and through commissioned services, there is a shortage of appropriately skilled people within the local labour market presently. This is not unique to Flintshire. We have explicitly referenced this as a priority issue through the HSP Strategy in regards to workforce development and resilience.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>The following risks and mitigations have been identified by way of control measures:</p> <p>Risk: Failure to meet the deadline for completing the HSP Strategy and having it in place for 1st April 2022</p> <p>Mitigation: A detailed project plan and a timetable for "political sign off" was approved by Senior Management and Informal Cabinet in November 2021 and we are now approaching final stages of adoption of the HSP Strategy with Scrutiny Committee 9th February 2022 and Cabinet 15th February 2022.</p> <p>Risk: Failure to utilise the full award of Housing Support Grant in light of the significant increase in award</p> <p>Mitigation: A robust delivery plan, prompt commissioning of services along with monitoring spend against the delivery plan through financial controls</p>

	<p>Risk: Failure to secure enough people into posts in order to fulfil the aspirations of the HSP Strategy and local HSG Delivery Plan.</p> <p>Mitigations: Adopt “Workforce Development & Resilience” as a priority for the HSP Strategy and work collaboratively with partners in the sector to invest and retain existing staff and attract more staff</p> <p>An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed as required and submitted for review to Welsh Government alongside the Draft Strategy and has been shared with partners. The IIA will be published on the Councils Website when the HSP Strategy is launched.</p>																	
3.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 647 1385 1375"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 647 743 797">Long-term</td> <td data-bbox="743 647 1385 797">Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 797 743 981">Prevention</td> <td data-bbox="743 797 1385 981">Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of peoples’ needs</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 981 743 1093">Integration</td> <td data-bbox="743 981 1385 1093">Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1093 743 1234">Collaboration</td> <td data-bbox="743 1093 1385 1234">Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1234 743 1375">Involvement</td> <td data-bbox="743 1234 1385 1375">Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1487 1385 2069"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1487 743 1816">Prosperous Wales</td> <td data-bbox="743 1487 1385 1816">Positive – With additional funding more jobs will be created to deliver housing related support on a greater scale within Flintshire. Opportunities to support the labour market through training and development opportunities are being considered in conjunction with colleagues from Communities for Work.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1816 743 1966">Resilient Wales</td> <td data-bbox="743 1816 1385 1966">Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1966 743 2069">Healthier Wales</td> <td data-bbox="743 1966 1385 2069">Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping, overcoming health inequalities associated with homelessness and poor housing</td> </tr> </table>		Long-term	Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all	Prevention	Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of peoples’ needs	Integration	Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations	Collaboration	Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users	Involvement	Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred	Prosperous Wales	Positive – With additional funding more jobs will be created to deliver housing related support on a greater scale within Flintshire. Opportunities to support the labour market through training and development opportunities are being considered in conjunction with colleagues from Communities for Work.	Resilient Wales	Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless	Healthier Wales	Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping, overcoming health inequalities associated with homelessness and poor housing
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		conditions and investment to increase targeted support for people with housing issues and mental ill-health
	More equal Wales	Positive – Services are delivered in a way that are inclusive for all. Consideration has been given to local and regional gaps in provision for often marginalised communities such as the homeless, those with mental health or substances issues and the LGBTQ+ community.
	Cohesive Wales	No Impact
	Vibrant Wales	No impact
	Globally responsible Wales	No impact

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p><u>Service User Engagement</u> A standardised consultation activity including questionnaire has been used across North Wales Local Authorities to inform the Strategy and ensure service user's insight informs strategic priorities.</p> <p>The standardised approach to engagement will enable key themes and issues to be considered both at the local and regional level. 112 responses received for Flintshire. Total responses for North Wales was 428 so Flintshire engagement activity has been well supported by our service users. A copy of the Service User Feedback is attached as Appendix 3.</p> <p>Service User feedback has been of great benefit and has offered significant insight that has helped identify and shape the priorities outlined within the HSP Strategy.</p>
4.02	<p><u>Service Provider Feedback</u> Online survey responses from local service providers have been very beneficial and again a standardised approach for North Wales enables shared challenges and issues for the region to be identified and reflected through specific regional actions within the Strategy and Action Planning process.</p> <p>Again take up and engagement in the process from Flintshire has been positive, with 42 Flintshire services engaging in the process. A total of 111 responses were received across the whole of North Wales. A copy of the Service Provider Feedback can be found attached as Appendix 4.</p> <p>Service Provider feedback has been of great benefit and has offered significant insight that has helped identify and shape the priorities outlined within the HSP Strategy.</p>

4.03	<p><u>Stakeholder and Key Partners Feedback on the Strategy</u> In order to ensure partners across public services, third sector and other departments of the Council endorse the HSP Strategy and sign up to the vision, priorities and action plan, a Draft Strategy was shared with Partners in early January 2022 for comment.</p> <p>The overwhelming support for the HSP Strategy from partners has been greatly appreciated and will serve Flintshire well in regards to ensuring homelessness and housing related support is a multi-agency priority.</p> <p>Feedback from Stakeholders and Key Partners has been taken into account when fine tuning the Strategy and responses issued to those agencies who have contributed towards this final stage of consultation activity.</p>
4.04	<p><u>Welsh Government Feedback on the Strategy</u> A Draft Version of the HSP Strategy was required to be submitted to Welsh Government for review by the 31st December 2021 and feedback was received mid-January.</p> <p>Positive feedback from Welsh Government was welcomed with some minor amendments and suggested changes which have now been considered and actioned as felt appropriate by Housing & Prevention Service Manager and the Housing Support Planning Group.</p> <p>Local Authorities are not required to adopt all suggested amendments or required to accept or action feedback. The feedback received was constructive and was carefully considered as part of the final HSP Strategy revisions.</p> <p>Welsh Government are not required to “sign off” on the Strategy (this is a local issue for Members to adopt for Flintshire), but we are grateful for their observations and advice throughout, and have benefited from regular support and guidance from our designated Relationship Manager at Welsh Government.</p>
4.05	<p><u>Housing Support Planning Group</u> Flintshire’s Housing Support Planning Group (HSPG) is a multi-agency group with clear Terms of Reference and have Strategic oversight of the Housing Support Grant regime and now the HSP Strategy.</p> <p>This group will be key to monitoring the success of the HSP Strategy and is a multi-agency group made up of key public services and 3rd sector representation. The Group met on the 20th January 2022 and unanimously support the HSP Strategy and have offered support and guidance on minor amendments in light of the suggestions of trusted partners and Welsh Government as referenced in section 4.03 and 4.04 of this report.</p> <p>Regular progress updates on delivery of the HSP Strategy and Action Plan will be issued to the HSPG and the membership will be extended to engage more key partners who will help in the delivery of the HSP</p>

	Strategy. This will ensure co-ordination and support for shared ownership of the agenda and Action Plan.
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Flintshire’s Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2026 Draft as of 31 st December 2021
5.02	Appendix 2 – Housing Support Programme LA Template: Guidance for developing the HSP Strategy
5.03	Appendix 3 – Service User Insight for HSP Strategy Development Consultation
5.04	Appendix 4 – Service Provider Insight for HSP Strategy Development Consultation

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	North Wales Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2022: People, homes and services “A regional approach to tackling homelessness in North Wales” https://www.cih.org/news/north-wales-regional-homelessness-strategy
6.02	Welsh Government Programme for government https://gov.wales/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026-hml
6.03	Housing Support Grant Guidance https://gov.wales/housing-support-grant-practice-guidance

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Martin Cooil – Housing & Prevention Service Manager Telephone: 07880 423234 E-mail: martin.cooil@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Housing Support Programme Strategy - the single strategic document on housing support and homelessness prevention. Regional Service User Questionnaire – this is a live online questionnaire where service users from the 6 Local Authorities can provide feedback for the service they have been provided through the HSG. Conwy host this questionnaire and provide annual reports for the region.

Housing First – is a housing and support approach which gives people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. Provides intensive, person-centred, holistic support that is open-ended. Places no conditions on individuals; however, they should desire to have a tenancy.

VAWDASV – Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is a fundamental violation of human rights, a cause and consequence of inequality and has far reaching consequences for families, children and society as a whole.

Dual Diagnosis – (also referred to as co-occurring disorders) is a term for when someone experiences a mental illness and a substance use disorder simultaneously. Either disorder (substance use or mental illness) can develop first.

Rapid Rehousing - Rapid rehousing is about taking a housing-led approach for rehousing people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long.

Relationship Manager – Each Local Authority now has a designated Relationship Manager linked to the housing support and homelessness agenda within the Housing Policy Division of Welsh Government.



FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME
STRATEGY 2022 – 2026

#EndingHomelessness
#HousingSupport

#HousingMattersWales
#PreventionPreventionPrevention

February 2022

Introduction	2
1a. Purpose of the Strategy	3
1b. Legislation and policy context	4
National Context.....	5
Local/Regional Context.....	6
1c. Vision and Principles	6
Needs Assessment.....	7
Needs Assessment Process	7
Written Statement of Need	8
Strategic Priorities	8
Stakeholder Engagement.....	12
4a. Stakeholders Engaged with.....	12
4b. Stakeholder Feedback	12
Impact Assessments	14
Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Strategy	15
Working with Partners.....	15
Funding Sources.....	15
Monitoring, reviewing and Evaluation arrangements	15
Annex A - Action Plan:	16
Annex B – Rapid Rehousing Plan (to be added June 2022)	25

Introduction

This Strategy outlines Flintshire’s strategic approach to housing support and homelessness prevention and satisfies the statutory requirements for the Local Authority to have a Homelessness Strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

The Strategy has taken into account the Welsh Governments vision and aims for the prevention of homelessness and the transformational shift needed to move to a rapid rehousing approach and has been informed by the Welsh Government Housing Support Practice Guidance for Local Authorities from April 2020 (updated in March 2021).

The Strategy is ambitious and looks to build on the significant positives that have been achieved since March 2020 when the Covid health pandemic hit the UK and Welsh Government instructed all Councils to adopt the “Everyone In” approach to safeguard homeless people and those at risk of rough sleeping.

With more people in temporary housing and being supported to exit homelessness we know that we have done well to help people who have experienced homelessness during the Covid pandemic. As we now focus on the recovery from the pandemic, we know we must do more to tackle the causes of homelessness and remove barriers to people being able to move into long term safe and settled housing at a time when the housing market is changing and demand for affordable housing is increasing.

This Strategy demonstrates that ending homelessness is much more than just building more homes, but does acknowledge that the supply of high quality affordable housing is a key strand within all of our ambitions to end homelessness in Flintshire. Other key elements include a clear focus on partnership working, earlier interventions to reduce housing support needs and risk of homelessness and the development of a wide range of prevention activities including high quality housing related support services.

Preventing homelessness is not exclusively the Housing Support & Homeless Prevention Services responsibility; it is a shared issue and very much “everyone’s business”. This Strategy

provides a very clear vision of ending homelessness and overcoming housing problems, for all partners working to improve the lives of the people of Flintshire. By working together we can all achieve more.

The Strategy also focusses on the wellbeing of our workforce and the important services that our staff deliver for the people of Flintshire. The last 2 years have been incredibly tough for all the people of Flintshire and this includes staff who have worked under immense pressure due to Covid. We respect and value all of our colleagues and will invest in them so they feel valued and energized to deliver on our ambition of ending homelessness and overcoming housing problems in Flintshire.

1a. Purpose of the Strategy

Flintshire's Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the strategic direction of Flintshire County Council in regards to homelessness prevention and housing related support services for the next four years (2022-2026). We will complete a mid-point review in 2 years (2024) and refresh our action plan in response to what we acknowledge is a challenging and changing landscape as we exit the covid pandemic..

This Strategy sets out the key priorities for the local authority and our partners when looking at our efforts to end homelessness and overcome housing problems and has been developed on the back of a comprehensive needs assessment process. We have also engaged with a wide range stakeholders and service users to ensure that the Strategy meets the needs of the people we serve and is informed by the views and intelligence of the partners we work with.

This Strategy satisfies the existing statutory requirement for the local authority to have a homeless strategy as required under Part of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Flintshire County Council had previously adopted the North Wales Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022, but we are now delivering our own Housing Support Programme Strategy. Our commitment to regional working remains strong and we have reviewed the North Wales Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 and elements of that Strategy have been incorporated into this Strategy.

1b. Legislation and policy context

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

The seven goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 has informed the development of the Housing Support Programme Strategy, by ensuring that we consider how we work better with people, communities and other organisations, as well as looking at how we prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach in the delivery of the strategy.

A prosperous Wales - An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing high quality employment.

A resilient Wales - A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

A healthier Wales - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A more equal Wales - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

A Wales of cohesive communities - Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language - A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

A globally responsible Wales - A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

National Context

The strategy satisfies the existing statutory requirements in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. In developing it, the Local Authority has reviewed the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, incorporating the relevant aims and priorities. Flintshire County Council's Housing Support Programme Strategy, is underpinned by the following national legislation and policy:

- **Housing (Wales) Act 2014**

This Act sets to improve the supply, quality and standards of housing in Wales. Includes a strengthened duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness. The Housing Support Grant makes a significant contribution to the implementation of Part 2 of this Act. Part 2 is focused on homeless prevention. It also reduces or prevents the need for, often more costly intervention to other public services.

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

This Act aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, by placing the sustainable development principle at the heart of all decision making. One key element of the sustainable development principle is a focus on prevention, which aligns closely with the central aims of the Housing Support Grant.

- **Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014**

Aims to improve the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ("the Act") requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation with their relevant partners and others, in relation to adults with needs for care and support, carers and children. It places a duty on relevant partners to co-operate with, and provide information to, the local authorities for the purpose of their social services functions.

- **Ending Homelessness: a high level Action Plan 2021 to 2026**

The Action Plan aims to direct activity at a high level, for the work required by the Welsh Government and its partners to end homelessness in Wales.

- **The Mental Health Act 2014**

The Mental Health Act came into effect on 1 July 2014. It sets out a framework intended to promote recovery-oriented practice, minimise compulsory treatment and protect and support the rights of people living with mental illness.

- **Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015**

This Act aims to improve the response within the public sector in Wales to all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Places a responsibility on public bodies to improve arrangements to promote awareness of, and prevent, protect and support victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse, sexual violence and modern slavery.

- **Housing Support Grant Practice Guidance 2020**

The Housing Support Grant Guidance was published in April 2020. HSG (Housing Support Grant) is an amalgamation of three existing grants; Supporting People Programme, Homeless Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant. The grant is distributed to local authorities to deliver, administer and to commission services to meet the vision and core purpose of the grant.

HSG is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.

HSG supports vulnerable people to address the, sometimes, multiple, problems they face, such as debt, employment, tenancy management, substance misuse, violent against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and mental health issues.

- **Equalities Act (Wales) 2010**

This Act requires all public bodies including the council to tackle discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations. An equality impact assessment was undertaken to identify any potential inequalities arising from the development and delivery of this plan.

- **Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014**

These Regulations make provision for which persons from abroad will be eligible or ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (“the Act”) and for housing assistance under Part 7 of the Act.

- **Welsh Government’s Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness, 2016**

This Code is Guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers. Local Authorities must have regard to this Code when exercising their functions in connection with allocations and homelessness. The Code comes in two parts. Part 1 relates to the allocation of accommodation in accordance with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 and, although updated to reflect changes in the law and relevant case law, largely follows the same format as the 2012 edition of the Code.

Part 2 of the Code covers Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) 2014 Act, which amends and consolidates all previous homelessness legislation. It explains the new legislation, and places it in the context of current Welsh Government policy.

- **National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate**

This document sets out the pathway for meeting the housing needs of children, young people and adults held in custody and who will be resettling in Wales.

- **Preventing Homelessness and Promoting Independence: A Positive Pathway to Adulthood**

A Positive Pathway to Adulthood Supporting young people on their journey to economic independence and success through housing advice, options and homelessness prevention.

- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015

Part 1 specifies additional matters which authorities must take into account. Part 2 specifies when B&B and shared accommodation are not suitable to be used for temporary accommodation. Part 3 specifies suitability of private rented sector accommodation for ending the section 75 duty to homeless applicants

- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

This Act will make it simpler and easier to rent a home, replacing various and complex pieces of existing legislation with one clear legal framework.

People who find themselves in difficult circumstances will also benefit from the Act. It will help to prevent current homelessness situations where a joint tenant leaves the tenancy, thereby ending the tenancy for everyone else. Inequalities in how someone can succeed to a tenancy are also addressed, with a new succession right for carers created.

- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and the Welsh Language Standards Regulations

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 places the Welsh language on the same equal legal status with English and must not be treated less favourably.

Local/Regional Context

At a local level, this strategy contributes to the following areas of work:

- Flintshire County Councils Plan 2021 - 2023
- Flintshire Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024
- Flintshire's Prospectus 2021
- Flintshire Local Housing Market Assessment update 2018 (was clarified in the February 2020 addendum version).
- A Well-being Plan for Flintshire 2017 - 2023

1c. Vision and Principles

“Ending homelessness, overcoming housing problems and delivering person centred support that meets the needs of people in Flintshire, through partnership working and early intervention”

In working to deliver our vision of ending homelessness and overcoming housing problems in Flintshire, we have adopted a number of core principles that will help us and our partners to achieve our shared goals and enable the delivery of this strategy and action plan. These principles are:-

- We will ensure that all Council services are committed to ending homelessness in Flintshire.
- We will work with partners to prevent homelessness, and where it cannot be prevented we will ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeated.
- We will support the people of Flintshire to live healthy and independent lives within safe homes and resilient communities
- We will deliver quality support services that are person centred and are informed through service user involvement.
- We will promote honesty, respect and dignity between the people who deliver our services and the people who benefit from our services
- We will celebrate the successes of our services and invest in our workforce to deliver the highest levels of support
- We will work with partners across the North Wales region on shared challenges and where opportunities for collaboration arise

Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment Process

A range of engagement techniques were used to gather and analyse data to determine Flintshire’s Needs Assessment. This included consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including service users who use / or have used homelessness services, delivery partners including Third Sector Organisations. This was also supported by statistics and data from Flintshire’s Statutory Homelessness Service and the Housing Support Grant Gateway.

Key sources of information used to inform the Needs Assessment are listed below:

- Population Needs Assessment
- Flintshire County Councils Prospectus 2021
- Local Authority Well-being Assessment
- Homelessness statistics and other housing data such as waiting lists
- Welsh index of multiple deprivation
- Feedback from service users
- Regional VAWDASV needs assessments
- Any relevant research/national publication
- Outcomes data
- Needs Data from Housing Support Gateway
- Unmet needs data over the last 12 months from providers, homelessness reviews

Key Findings & Conclusions

There is an imbalance between single person accommodation and the numbers of single people presenting as homeless and staying in temporary accommodation for significant periods of time. To address the issue Flintshire have begun working to the Rapid Rehousing Model which will offer varied support levels to ensure households presenting get the correct support when it is needed.

Single homeless people under 35, people with mental health support needs and people with criminal offending issues represent a high proportion of presentations to the homelessness team. Support needs are more complex with mental health, criminal offending and domestic abuse increasing.

Homelessness is not just about housing and many of the people who experience housing issues and homelessness often have complex support needs. Improve pathways for support and ensure there is a multi-agency working approach to dealing with complex needs. This will also ensure people can access all services in a timely manner.

Access to Private rented Sector (PRS). Limited social housing, increasing demand, and lengthier waiting times, mean that supporting people to access the private rental sector is more important than ever. Having dedicated officers working with landlords, letting agencies and prospective private renters to remove barriers to securing a privately rented home in Flintshire

Recruitment issues due to short term contracts, pay scales. Staff wellbeing and to be able to retain staff with good terms and conditions across all commissioned projects. To ensure training in all areas is provided and staff are supporting individuals using a Trauma informed/multi agency approach.

Re-commissioning of all Housing Support Grant projects to ensure they meet the needs of the people accessing the services.

Statement of Need (attached)

Draft Flintshire County Councils Prospectus July 21



APPENDIX 1 draft
prospectus vers 4.pc

Strategic Priorities

Flintshire County Council and its partners have agreed the following strategic priorities for the delivery of the Housing Support Programme Strategy. These priorities have been developed in response to intelligence gathered through the needs assessment process and following stakeholder and service user engagement. The priorities also align with wider corporate and Welsh Government policy and guidance.

Priority 1 – Adopting Early Intervention and Targeted Prevention Activities

Welsh Governments ongoing commitment to tackling housing problems through the Housing Support Grant is welcomed and enables us to offer more intensive support, targeted at people

at risk of homelessness and at those who are struggling to live independently. There also needs to be a continued commitment from all public services and third sector groups working within Flintshire to deliver services that enable people to have a good quality of life and reduce poverty and hardship, as this will further reduce risks related to housing problems and prevent more people experiencing homelessness.

We know that the earliest interventions are the most cost effective and can have the most significant impact. We will strengthen systems for identifying people with housing problems and those who are at risk of homelessness earlier. We will ensure targeted support is put in place at the earliest opportunity. We know that certain groups of people are at greater risk of homelessness and we shall ensure the Council and our partners have appropriate pathways and protocols to demonstrate joint working and support for people at greater risk of housing hardship and homelessness.

Priority 2 – Strengthening Person Centred Approaches and Responding to Complex Needs

Many of the people we work with experience significant challenges around their personal well being and struggle due to unmet needs in their daily lives. These needs can be significant, complex and they often don't happen in isolation. Whilst housing support related services can support people to overcome many issues, there is a need for more effective partnership working and clearer pathways for support when dealing with some areas of peoples lives. This can include but is not be limited to offending behaviours, substance misuse, learning disabilities, mental health, history of exploitation or domestic abuse.

We know that homelessness is rarely just about housing and many of the people who experience housing hardship and homelessness often have complex support needs. We will improve pathways for support and ensure multi-agency working is at the heart of our approach to dealing with complex needs. We will listen to the people who need and use our services and we will use their feedback, to ensure our services are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the people of Flintshire.

Priority 3 – Developing the TrACE Agenda

There is a need for a more professions and organisations to be aware of the impact of trauma on the people we support and the significant and negative impact that adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) can have on our residents. All services and staff need to consider their role in preventing, mitigating and tackling ACEs, to ensure an integrated and innovative approach to health and wellbeing generally, that supports prevention work and early intervention. As such we want to support services to better understand this field of work and ensure services are helped to develop their approaches to the TrACE Agenda and that we commission high quality services that are trauma informed and ACE aware.

We know that housing problems and homelessness can be incredibly traumatic for people. We also know that many people in Flintshire will have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACE's). We will work with our partners to ensure our support services are trauma informed and ACE aware and we will all learn from those services who are already delivering best practice in this area of work.

Priority 4 – Supporting Workforce Development and Resilience

It is important there is an acknowledgement that responding to the current and future demand for housing support and homelessness services in Flintshire is a significant challenge. Investing in the people who deliver these critical services will be important to ensure the workforce is skilled, resilient and ready for the challenges ahead. A range of training, development and support across all service providers, along with attractive terms and conditions will ensure the sector can retain and attract an appropriately skilled workforce.

We know that our workforce are our greatest asset and we will support them to deliver the highest standards of housing related support and homeless prevention services. We will all work positively and creatively towards ending homelessness and overcoming housing problems in Flintshire and will support and respect each other along the way.

Priority 5 – Reviewing and improving Flintshire's Housing Offer

Housing alone is not the solution to ending homelessness; but it is a key component. With ambitious plans to build more affordable housing, we will focus on providing more homes for the people of Flintshire. We also need to improve access to our local Private Rented Sector at a time when the local market is changing post Covid. People who use our services tell us they want to see more supported housing that not only provides excellent support services but also offers high quality accommodation for vulnerable people. Over time and with good access to other housing options, our reliance on temporary and emergency housing will reduce.

We know that ending homelessness is not just about building more housing, and we must make the best use of the wide range of housing we presently have in Flintshire. We will do this whilst also delivering ambitious build programmes to increase the supply of high quality affordable housing. We must ensure we can meet the diverse housing and accommodation needs of the local population.

Priority 6 – Moving towards a “Rapid Rehousing” approach

Rapid rehousing looks to provide people experiencing homeless with settled, secure, self-contained housing as quickly as possible before addressing their support needs. There is no requirement for people to be assessed before going into accommodation. The development of a “Transition Plan” will inform the approach that see’s Flintshire statutory and support services move towards rapid rehousing as the default position for the prevention and relief of homeless. The Transition Plan will provide a road map for this journey and ensure all Flintshire services embrace the opportunities for change in our approaches, whilst also building on current positive practices.

We know that the move to a Rapid Rehousing approach will take time, but we are committed to embracing this challenge and are focused on ensuring homelessness is rare, brief and non-repeated. We will develop and adopt our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan with our partners support and ensure that the views of people who experience homelessness are placed at the heart of this process of change.

The actions needed to help us deliver on our local priorities and timelines for completion are outlined within our Housing Support Programme Action Plan which is attached as Appendix A.

Stakeholder Engagement

Internal and external partners and services were consulted with the process of developing the strategy, consultation has been undertaken in line with the duties set out in the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the five ways of working.

4a. Stakeholders Engaged with

Broader stakeholder engagement to be completed in Q4 of 21/22.

The following sources of engagement have been used:

- North Wales HSG Service User questionnaire accessed via:
<https://www.conwy.gov.uk/sep/snap/hsgstrategy/user/en/>
<https://www.conwy.gov.uk/sep/snap/hsgstrategy/user/cy/>
- North Wales HSG Provider questionnaire accessed via:
<https://www.conwy.gov.uk/sep/snap/hsgstrategy/provider/en/>
<https://www.conwy.gov.uk/sep/snap/hsgstrategy/provider/cy/>

4b. Stakeholder Feedback

Providers

A regional Provider questionnaire was sent out by each of the North Wales authorities and the Regional Development Co-ordinator compiled the responses for each authority. A copy of the findings is attached below.

The main themes coming out of the provider questionnaire:-

- More accommodation required to be able to move to a rapid rehousing approach
- More Affordable housing is required
- Access to PRS – support for tenants and landlords
- Supported housing for people with complex and or multiple issues
- Easier access to Mental Health services is required

- There are now longer waits for appointments at MH and substance misuse services
- Mental Health Awareness training
- More training/Awareness of what Rapid Rehousing is. Collective response.
- More PIE training for all staff
- Problems with recruitment of Support Staff – due to short term contracts, pay scales, little to no interest in job adverts
- Hoarding Officers in each authority

Link to the summary of the Provider Questionnaire feedback (+ copy of questionnaire)



HSP Strategy
Provider Questionnaire



HSG Programme
Strategy Questionnaire



HSG Programme
Strategy Questionnaire

Service Users

A regional Service User questionnaire was sent out by each of the North Wales authorities and the Regional Development Co-ordinator compiled the responses for each authority. (Copied in Needs Assessment). Flintshire received 112 responses from Service Users, note not all responses will equate back to 112 as not all questionnaires were mandatory.

Some themes identified from the Service User Questionnaire were:-

- 33% of responses said they did not know how to access support.
- The majority of people would prefer to receive support face to face.
- 53 people stated there were no barriers to them receiving support.
- 99% of responses said they are able to receive support in the language of their choice
- 72% of responses said public transport prevented them accessing support
- 38% of responses rated the quality of accommodation as excellent and 42% rated good.
- Of the responses received regarding affording current rental prices – 34% Maybe, 33% no and 33% yes.

Themes identified from partners and internal council departments were:

- Supply of accommodation does not meet the needs of people, such as single people
- Lack of Access to housing and affordable housing
- Accessing PRS is extremely difficult
- Recruitment; many vacancies are not attracting any applicants or the applicants are not suitable.

Impact Assessments

Impact Assessments undertaken:-

- An IIA Integrated Impact Assessment which includes equality, environment, health, human rights, socio-economic Duty, United Nations Conventions the Rights of the Child and the Welsh language. The Impact Assessment was completed by a HSG Officer with guidance from the Flintshire Equalities Policy Development Officer and Biodiversity Officer.
- Data Protection Impact Assessment – This was completed by a HSG Officer with guidance from a Flintshire Information Compliance Officer.

Links to the Data Protection and Integrated Impact Assessment below:-



HSP Impact
Assessment DP.docm



HSP Impact
Assessment Integrat

Key Findings

No negative impacts were identified from the Data Protection Impact Assessment or the Integrated Impact Assessment undertaken.

With regards to the Integrated Impact Assessment no one is excluded from any Housing Support/Homelessness project because of their protected characteristics, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation etc.

As a region, we commissioned LGBTQ+ training for all HSG/Homeless staff and are also looking at commissioning another regional LGTBQ+ project, we have consulted with this protected characteristic group to gain their views to ensure all needs are met.

Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Strategy

Working with Partners

The council will work with Partners to ensure that the strategy and action plans are implemented and monitored accordingly, and to review and revise any plans where necessary based upon performance evaluations. There is also representation from these services on the Housing Support Planning Group and RHSCG.

Funding Sources

Housing Support Grant

Statutory Core Funding

Social Housing Grant

Children & Communities Grant

Monitoring, reviewing and Evaluation arrangements

The Housing Support Planning Group will have overall control of the priorities within the Strategy with updates provided by the HSG Team. Also reporting back to the Chief Officer of Housing and RHSCG.

An annual report will be submitted to Community Housing & Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee detailing the progress made against the Action Plan (Annex A).

Annex A - Action Plan:

Priority 1 - Adopting Early Intervention and Prevention Activities

Action Ref	Action required to deliver the priority	Tasks	Timescales	Output
7.1.1	Develop a culture across all public services that enables early intervention and targeted prevention of homelessness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Flintshire Housing Support Forum and schedule regular meeting with partners quarterly 2. Extend Membership and promote the positive networking, knowledge hub and communications opportunities available through the Housing Support Forum 3. Further roll out of the Housing Support and Homeless Prevention Training and Awareness sessions across a wide range of partners 	2022	Improve awareness of housing support and homeless prevention services and develop a community of best practice within Flintshire

7.1.2	Develop a range of pathways and protocols that clearly evidence joint working arrangements with key partners in regards to the prevention of homelessness as outlined in Housing (Wales) Act 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Routine analysis of data to identify those cohorts of people who have significantly increased risk of housing hardship or homelessness 2. Identify all key partners where pathways and protocols required to document commitments and obligations for joint working on the prevention and relief of homelessness 3. Develop pathways and protocols as required to ensure accountability from all public services who contribute towards the prevention and relief of homelessness 	2023	Targeted support and interventions identified for groups of people at greatest risk of homelessness established and clear commitments from partners for joint working secured
7.1.3	Re-commission a wide range of housing related support and homelessness prevention services through the Housing Support Grant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build staff capacity within the Housing Support Grant Commissioning Team through service restructure 2. Complete a large scale commissioning process for all Housing Support Grant funded services in Flintshire 3. Ensure seamless transition to new contract arrangements with minimal impact on service delivery 	2023	Ensure Flintshire housing support services are strong and resilient for the challenges ahead and that a wide range of services are available to meet the needs of the people of Flintshire's

7.1.4	Offer support to local community groups who deliver activities that complement the Housing Support and Homeless Prevention Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map out all local community groups who contribute to the housing support and homelessness agenda 2. Engage with local groups to ensure their work is complimentary to the vision of ending homelessness and overcoming housing problems as outlined in this Strategy 3. Offer advice and support to local groups to ensure their services are accessible, sustainable and of a high quality 	2023	Ensure local community groups are supported to deliver services that promote and enable independent living and reduce reliance on statutory services
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Priority 2 – Strengthening Person Centred Approaches and Responding to Complex Needs

Action Ref	Action required to deliver the priority	Tasks	Timescales	Output
7.2.1	Develop a coordinated approach to responding to customers with complex needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage key partners and agree a format for a multi-agency Complex Needs Panel for early intervention and multi-agency support 2. Review the work of the Assertive Outreach Programme and learn lessons on how to manage complex needs and open up pathways into support 3. Develop Service Level Agreements with key public service areas to enable positive commitments for joint working on matters relating to complex needs 	2022	Ensure all partners working to support people with complex needs and engage effectively in positive person centred action planning
7.2.2	Develop a consistent approach to support young people to: (1) Avoid homelessness (2) Become tenancy ready. (3) Maintain their tenancy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Youth Homelessness Action Plan in partnership with a wide range of local partners 2. Train up a range of frontline workers in Tenant Ready Training courses for young people 3. Extend the Housing First Project to enable capacity to offer a specific service for Young People in Flintshire 	2022	Offer robust personal plans for young people that include support to access training and employment opportunities, and resolve any debt and management money issues.

7.2.3	Ensure that nobody who has previously slept rough returns to a street based lifestyle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to support people who have previously slept rough and have been offered interim housing during the Covid pandemic to help them move on and exit homelessness 2. Build on the initial success of the Housing First Project and increase capacity to help more people 3. Learn from the success of the “homeless hub” and use this intelligence to further develop and inform future service delivery 	2022	Maintain positive outcomes and momentum regarding the relief of homelessness within the rough sleeper cohort post covid
7.2.4	Continue to provide Housing Solutions to prison leavers prior to release maximising opportunities to work in collaboration to ensure effective use of resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase staff and support service capacity linked to the Homeless Team for Prison Leavers and those with a history of offending who are homeless or at risk of homelessness 2. Continue to support the development of the North Wales Homeless Prevention Taskforce 3. Strengthen links with Probation service and explore opportunities for further collaborative work around accommodation and support services 	2022	Support more prison leavers to avoid homelessness or exit it quickly post release

7.2.5	Develop a knowledge base that builds on the Wales Audit Office Report “Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone’s Problem; No One’s Responsibility” to evidence cost benefit of addressing complex needs in Flintshire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage key public service partners in discussions about developing the evidence base 2. Agree a methodology for capturing the data and costs for service delivery associated with complex needs cases 3. Capture the evidence associated with costs for managing complex needs and use this information to inform future service delivery and targeted interventions 	2023	Better understand the costs associated with homelessness and the cost benefits for all public services
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Priority 3 – Developing the TrACE Agenda

Action Ref	Action required to deliver the priority	Tasks	Timescales	Output
7.3.1	Work with housing support and homeless prevention services to develop Trauma informed and ACE aware service delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit a TrACE Champion and embed within Flintshire’s Housing Support Grant Commissioning team 2. Work with in-house and commissioned services to undertake the TrACE organisations self assessment process 3. Support services to respond to the findings of their self assessment 	2022	Local services work towards becoming more trauma informed and ACE aware in their service delivery
7.3.2	Ensure progress on the development of the TrACE Agenda is captured and celebrated within housing support and homeless prevention services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop opportunities to review progress in regards to the TrACE Agenda through the Contracts and Reviewing process for Housing Support Grant commissioned services 2. Explore opportunities to recognise and celebrate the progress and impact of the TrACE Agenda in Flintshire 	2023	TrACE Agenda is working effectively and benefiting the people using the services. Ensure successes are celebrated.

Priority 4 – Supporting Workforce Development and Resilience

Action Ref	Action required to deliver the priority	Tasks	Timescales	Output
7.4.1	Explore opportunities to work with commissioned services to develop a consistent approach to terms and conditions of employment to ensure the Flintshire services can retain and attract an appropriately skilled workforce.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage commissioned services in discussions about staff terms and conditions and workforce support 2. Work with commissioned services to develop shared messaging, communications plans opportunities for joint working for workforce recruitment 	2022	Retain and attract appropriately skilled workforce.
7.4.2	Develop a range of training, staff development and well being support across all housing related support and homeless prevention services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a “Workforce Wellbeing” sub group of the Housing Support Forum 2. Develop a shared action plan for “Workforce Wellbeing” across housing support and homeless prevention services in Flintshire 	2022	Staff are trained to the appropriate level to support the people coming through our services.
7.4.3	Recognise the quality of work and high standards of professionalism within the workforce and ensure staff commitments are rewarded	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Workforce Recognition Scheme for all housing support and homeless prevention services within Flintshire 2. Promote the successes of the housing support and homeless prevention sector in Flintshire and celebrate the achievements of our workforce 	2023	Retention and recognition of staff to improve workforce moral.

Priority 5 – Review and improve Flintshire’s Housing Offer

Action Ref	Action required to deliver the priority	Tasks	Timescale	Output
7.5.1	Complete a review of Flintshire’s Homeless accommodation offer and explore opportunities to develop a purpose built Homeless Hub.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver on the Temporary Accommodation Service Improvement Plan (Audit Response) 2. Progress plans for the development of a purpose built Homeless Hub with accommodation and support services under one roof (Glanrafon v.2.0) 	2023	Improve the quality of accommodation and property management within Flintshire’s Homeless accommodation portfolio
7.5.2	Improve the standard of accommodation within Flintshire’s Supported Housing portfolio.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with existing services to identify opportunities for accommodation improvements and investment 2. Develop a Flintshire Standard for quality accommodation within Flintshire’s Supported Housing Portfolio 3. Ensure new services commissioned through Housing Support Grant have a high quality accommodation offer 4. Work up plans for the development of a young person’s housing hub offering a range of accommodation and support services 	2023	Raise the standards of accommodation in our Supported Housing Portfolio

7.5.3	Work with housing partners to ensure Flintshire’s social housing stock meets the needs of the residents of Flintshire.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore opportunities to make best use of existing social housing with consideration given to re-designation of homes if required 2. Review approaches to “local lettings policies” to ensure they don’t create undue barriers to rehousing and meet the needs of all residents of Flintshire 3. Work with housing partners to look at shared housing models within social housing 4. Deliver the Social Housing Grant Programme and increase the supply of social housing 	2023	Increase supply of social housing and ensure the stock we have meets local demand
7.5.4	Develop Flintshire’s Private Rented Sector Offer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a specialist Private Sector Housing Team within the Housing Support and Homeless Prevention Service 2. Engage with Landlords to better understand their needs and aspirations for Flintshire’s PRS 3. Sign up to the National Private Rented Sector Leasing Scheme. 	2023	Offering more services and support for tenants and landlords within the local private rented sector

Priority 6 - Rapid Rehousing

Action Ref	Action required to deliver the priority	Tasks	Timescale	Output
7.6.1	Develop the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for Flintshire.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a multi-agency Rapid Rehousing Working Group 2. Consult with the people who use our services to ensure our Plans meet with their needs and are informed by lived experience 3. Adopt the Transition Plan and commence period of transformation 	2022	A clear plan for the move to Rapid Rehousing in Flintshire
7.6.2	Further develop the Housing First service for Flintshire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase capacity within the Housing First service to support more people with complex needs and history of rough sleeping to exit homelessness 2. Develop a Young Persons Housing First model for Flintshire 	2022	Support more people into long term settled housing through the Housing First Model

Annex B – Rapid Rehousing Plan

It has been agreed by the Welsh Government the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan can be submitted in June 2022.

Local Authority

Housing Support Programme
Strategy

April 2022- March 2026

Template

Content Page

Foreword (Optional)

Foreword from the Chief Executive of the local authority, Cabinet Leader, Cabinet Member, etc.

1. Introduction

Local authorities should develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy (“the Strategy”) every four years, with a mid-point review every two years, which will outline the strategic direction of the local authority for housing related support services. This should provide a single strategic view of the local authority’s approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services. As such, it would include both statutory homelessness functions funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the Housing Support Grant (HSG).

Local authorities must ensure the Strategy, as the single strategic document on housing support and homelessness prevention, also satisfies the existing statutory requirements for a homelessness strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. There is no requirement to produce a separate strategy.

The Strategy should take into account how it can support delivery of the Welsh Government’s vision and aims for the prevention of homelessness and the transformational shift required to move to a rapid re-housing approach as outlined in the specific guidance to be provided to local authorities in respect of this.

This section should set out the overall purpose and scope of the Strategy, including the legislative and policy context.

1a Purpose of the Strategy

Set out the purpose and scope of the Strategy, e.g.

- *Confirm that it sets out the single strategic direction of the local authority for homelessness prevention and housing related support services for the next four years (2022 – 2026).*
- *It identifies and sets out the key priorities for the local authority and its partners – based on findings from a comprehensive needs assessment and stakeholder engagement.*
- *Confirm that the Strategy satisfies the existing statutory requirements for a homelessness strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. State whether the local authority’s Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022, published in 2018, has been reviewed, updated and incorporated into this single Housing Support Programme Strategy.*

1b Legislative and policy context

National context

Provide a high level overview of relevant law and/or national policy relevant to the Strategy, e.g. Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Housing Support Grant Practice Guidance, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Evidence of how relevant provisions of legislation or policy has been applied or considered should be referenced in the relevant section within the Strategy. For example, consideration of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) should run throughout all stages of developing your Strategy, and in the planning and delivery of your services (there is a [framework tool](#) to help people working in public services apply the Well-being of Future Generations Act ways of working to service design).

Local/Regional context

Set out a high level overview of the local and regional policy context and relevant plans applicable in developing the Strategy, e.g. Local/Regional Housing Strategy, Corporate Plans, Well-Being Plans, Rough Sleeper Action Plan, etc.

Explain how the Local Housing Strategy has informed this Strategy and how the Strategy sits within the local authority's overall housing strategic approach.

Explain how each of the policies/plans have been applied or considered within the relevant section of the Strategy e.g. well-being plans informing the needs assessment.

1c Vision and principles

Set out the local authority's overall four year vision for homelessness prevention and housing related support services (what the local authority would like the future to look like/the position they would like to achieve in the future)

Vision

For example, the Welsh Government's vision for housing (as set out in the current *Prosperity for All: the national strategy 2017-2021*)

"We want everyone to live in a home that meets their needs and supports a healthy, successful and prosperous life".

What key principles will be employed to deliver your vision?

How do these key principles align with your well-being objectives?

Example principles

- *We will work with partners to prevent homelessness, and where it cannot be prevented ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeatable.*

- *We will work to ensure that every person has fair and equal access to good quality housing, and housing related support and advice at the earliest possible opportunity in order to prevent homelessness and/ or maintain independent living*

2. Needs assessment

As set out in the HSG Guidance, local authorities are required to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment every four years, with a light touch review every two years. The assessment should:

- provide a statement of what the local authority knows about the needs and future demand for homelessness prevention and housing support services;
- inform the strategic priorities;
- encompass the statutory requirement for a homelessness review as well as the full assessment for the HSG, and
- be informed by, but not limited to, the following data:
 - Population needs assessment
 - Local authority well-being assessment
 - Homelessness statistics and other housing data such as waiting lists.
 - Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
 - Feedback from service users
 - Regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence needs assessments
 - Any relevant research/national publication
 - Outcomes data
 - Needs data from providers, gateway panels
 - Unmet needs data over the last 12 months from providers, homelessness reviews

Some of the above will be undertaken as part of the Local Housing Market Assessment and as such these exercises can and should complement each other.

See section 51 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) and [Chapter 5 of the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness](#), for details of the requirement for a Homelessness Review and what it should cover.

The needs assessment will also inform the HSG Annual Delivery Plan. The service response to be set out by the authority in its commissioning plan (which is part of the HSG Delivery Plan) should demonstrably respond to the needs identified in this assessment.

Local authorities should produce a 'Statement of Need' based on findings from the needs assessment. It should:

- set out the current and future demands,
- include regional needs where the needs are met by the local authority, and

- state how statutory needs identified will be met through the discharge of statutory duties.

The format of this statement is for the authority to decide and can be produced collaboratively.

The full needs assessment undertaken should be recorded and saved as a separate document and titled 'Statement of Need'. It does not need to be included within the Strategy document, but must be available on request and published alongside the Strategy.

This section should summarise the Statement of Need as follows:

2a Needs Assessment process

Briefly explain that a needs assessment has been undertaken and the process employed. Provide a link to the 'Statement of Need' document.

2b Key findings

List the sources of evidence/information used for the needs assessment (see above).

Summarise the key findings/issues identified from the needs assessment.

2c Conclusion

Provide an overall conclusion of the statement of need

.....

3. Strategic priorities

Set out the local authority's agreed strategic priorities for the delivery of HSG (housing related support) and homelessness prevention services. The priorities should be informed by the needs assessment and stakeholder engagement undertaken, and any Welsh Government or local authority wider policy requirements (e.g. move to rapid rehousing).

This should also include any agreed regional housing related support strategic objectives agreed with partners and the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group.

This section should include:

- A description of the priorities, e.g. to increase access to private rented sector housing.
- Why it is a priority (e.g. gap in provision identified). How you are going to deliver the priorities. What are the key actions required to deliver the priorities. To note that the action plan at Annex 1 will need to include the specific details of the actions (what, when, who, etc.).

- The priorities should be numbered for ease of cross referencing.
- To include the local authority's local level priorities and any agreed regional priorities.
- One of the priorities must be around your approach to targeted prevention as set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- One of the priorities must be around the local authority's shift to rapid rehousing.

Example priorities:

Strategic priority 1 – Move to adopt a Rapid Rehousing approach

In line with Welsh Government policy direction, we will implement our Rapid Rehousing transition plan as included at Annex 2.

Strategic priority 2 – Strengthen and expand access to mental health support provision to meet increase in demand

The needs assessment identified an increase in the number of people with complex needs requiring access to mental health support provision. To meet this increase in demand, the authority will undertake a comprehensive review of current provision and work with key partners to ensure effective services are delivered to meet future need.

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4. Stakeholder engagement

As well as consulting with their Housing Strategy Team in the process of developing their Strategy, local authorities must consult and engage with the following stakeholders (as a minimum). This engagement must be undertaken in line with the duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the 5 Ways of Working.

- Health services
- Social services
- Probation services
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Boards
- Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards
- Children and Communities Grant
- Providers
- Landlords
- Service Users
- Carers and families of people who use the services

How this is to be achieved and what mechanisms are used is the decision of the local authority. Evidence of how the local authority has engaged with stakeholders to develop the Strategy should be included within the Strategy (e.g. How have you engaged and collaborated with stakeholders? How have stakeholders been involved

in the decision affecting them? How does the strategy integrate with the vision/aims/priorities/principles of stakeholders?)

This section should include:

4a Stakeholders engaged with

List the group of stakeholders engaged with and the mechanisms used for doing this, e.g. surveys, engagement events, etc.

4b. Stakeholder feedback

Summarise the feedback received form the stakeholder engagement. What were the key issues/findings?

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5. Impact assessments

As part of the strategic planning process, authorities are required to undertake appropriate impact assessments of the strategy, particularly the strategic priorities identified at section 3.

As a minimum this should include:

- Equality Impact Assessment - Summarise the impact of the strategic priorities identified on people with protected characteristics
- Welsh Language Impact Assessment - Identify the impacts and actions required to ensure delivery of the range and level of services needed in line with the Welsh Language Standards requirements placed on the local authority.
- Children’s Rights Impact Assessment – Whilst the HSG does not directly support children, many of the households supported will include children and therefore it is appropriate to conduct this assessment and consider the impact of the Strategy on children’s rights.
- Any additional impact assessments required by the local authority

The full impact assessments undertaken should be recorded and saved as a separate document titled ‘Housing Support Programme Strategy Impact Assessment’, and be available on request. They do not need to be included within this Strategy document.

This section should list the impact assessments undertaken, and a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts identified for each assessment and any action to be taken to address any negative impacts.

5a Impact assessment process

Briefly explain that a comprehensive impact assessment exercise has been undertaken of the strategic priorities and the process employed. Provide a link to the ‘HSP Impact Assessment’ document.

5b Key findings

List the impact assessments undertaken (see above).

Summarise the positive and/or negative impacts identified for each assessment and any action to be taken to address any negative impacts.

.....

6. Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Strategy

6a Working with partners

Set out how the authority will work with key partners such as health, care and criminal justice in order to deliver and optimise the impact of the strategy.

6b Funding sources

Set out what different funding sources will be accessed to deliver the Strategy.

6c Monitoring, reviewing and evaluation arrangements

The HSG guidance sets out local authorities should develop a HSP Strategy every four years, with a mid-point review every two years.

This section should set how the authority will locally monitor, review and evaluate the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan (at Annex A).

.....

Annex A

Each local authority must have an action plan setting out the actions required to deliver the strategic priorities at section 2. This should also include regional priorities where action is delivered by the local authority.

ACTION PLAN

Priority (from Section 2)	Action required to deliver the priority	Timescales/ By When	Lead person	Outcome/Outputs

.....

Annex B

Insert Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

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APPENDIX 3

Flintshire Service User responses to Housing Support Grant Strategy Consultation Questionnaire.

Regionally each local authority across North Wales has agreed to work on consulting across the six authorities collectively to gather input from both service users and providers to inform and shape their HSG strategy.

Two questionnaires were designed; one for service users receiving housing support grant funded services and another to Providers that receive housing support grant funds to deliver support. Both questionnaires had the option to state which authority they are sharing their response(s) with, which ensured a breakdown of analysis could be completed for each local authority.

The questionnaires were sent out at the same time, 18th September 2021 and closing date of 18th October 2021 for responses, a four week consultation period.

The service user questionnaire has the option to be completed online or paper copy, the provider questionnaire was online only.

Across the board 428 responses were received from service users and 111 provider responses were received.

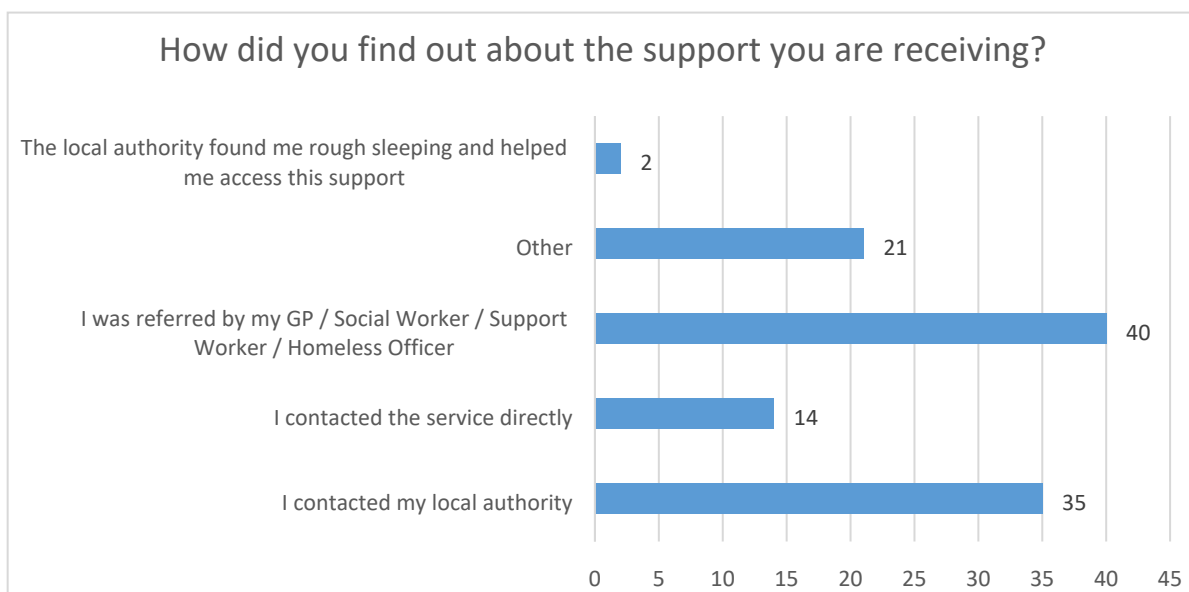
Flintshire received 112 responses from service users, note not all responses will equate back to 112, the only mandatory question was which authority you receive support in.

Analysis:

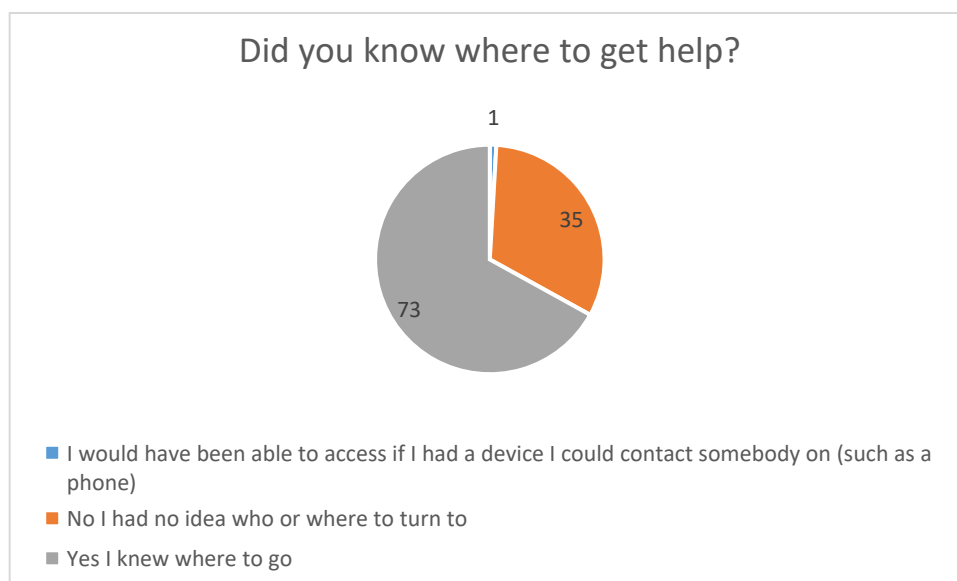
Out of the 103 service users that returned a response to this question, 73 were receiving floating support style service, and 30 service users were receiving support in a supported housing accommodation.

The questionnaire asks how they found out about the support they are receiving. Regionally at the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG) it has been discussed whether we need to market ourselves more across North Wales and the responses to this question will help inform how widely known the HSG programme is.

For Flintshire:



Other responses included; already living in sheltered accommodation, local MP signposted me, prison officer, probation officer, police signposted and through a friend and word of mouth. We then asked whether they knew where to turn to; to receive this support or who to contact and they said;



We asked in the questionnaire how we can improve and where we should publicise the HSG programme, the responses received included: Having a directory was a popular answer for FCC.

- Advertise
- Citizens Advice
- GP surgeries
- Having some sort of central list of what services are available and telling you how to get in touch with them, with phone numbers and waiting times etc.
- hostel and police told me where to go
- I have had a social worker for about 7 years and I would not have known how to get the help if it wasn't for the social worker
- I was at my local connects who helped
- I was referred by accommodation support. I wouldn't have known myself who could help in certain areas. I am just grateful they knew who could help me.
- I was referred to ACNEW by someone else who knew they could help me. Services seem to know who to refer to and who can help, but we as community residences don't have access to a specific place to go to find out who we need to deal with issues. Not everyone has access to internet. Directory or some sort is needed.
- I had moved back to the area and did not know where to go or what local support was available here. I am not sure what the best way would be but there should be some support to see what there is available, possibly from the council and lists of what services and how to get on their lists.
- posters / advertisement
- School
- Social media, internet, connects
- there needs to be more information online which is accessible easier

Some service users did state in this question:

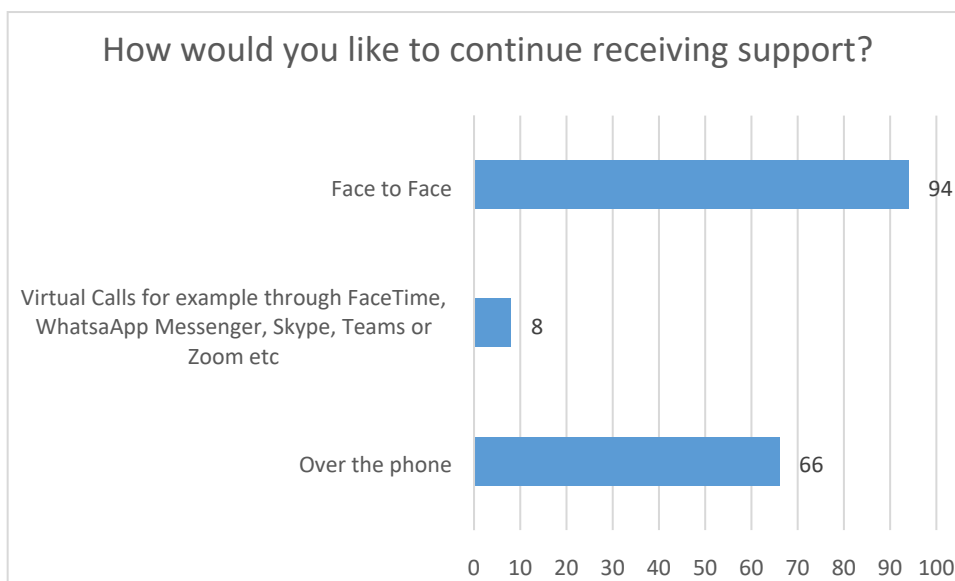
- I didn't understand what was going on around me, someone had to tell me I was being mentally abused. My health visitor referred me to DASU
- I had moved back to the area and did not know where to go or what local support was available here. I am not sure what the best way would be but there should be some support to see what there is available, possibly from the council and lists of what services and how to get on their lists.

Just short of 200 service users across the region did not know where to access support, this was not solely an issue for Flintshire, however Flintshire's responses boast better compared to other authorities that people in Flintshire were more aware where to get support, but still work to be done promoting the service.

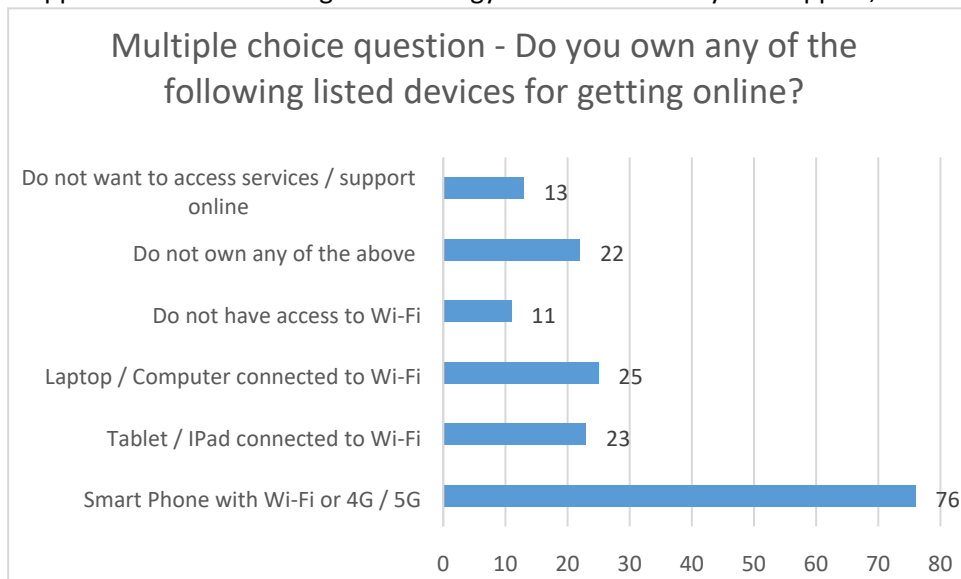
Covid-19 and Technology

Covid-19 has seen us all adapt to technologies to ensure we can stay in touch and continue to have a form of communication. The RHSCG was conscious of the affect technology had on support and commissioned Laura Patterson Ltd regionally to consult with local authority colleagues, providers of housing related support, and service users on the impact of Covid-19.

Providers had to adapt over night, and for some people as Laura's research showed preferred over the phone contact rather than face to face, or video call to reduce time in day getting to support meetings. So the questionnaire asked how they would like to continue receiving support.

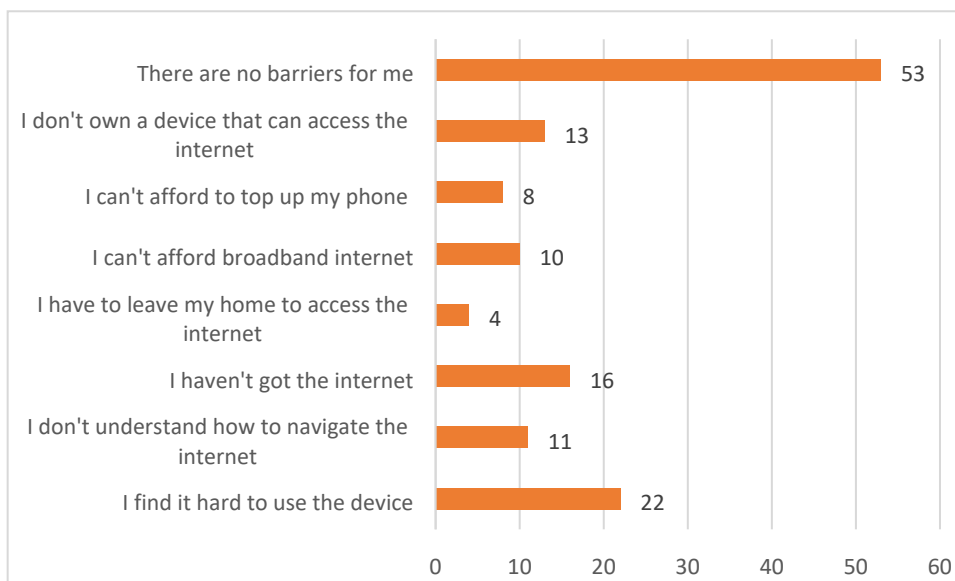


90 people stated their support worker has the right technology to be able to carry out support, 14 were



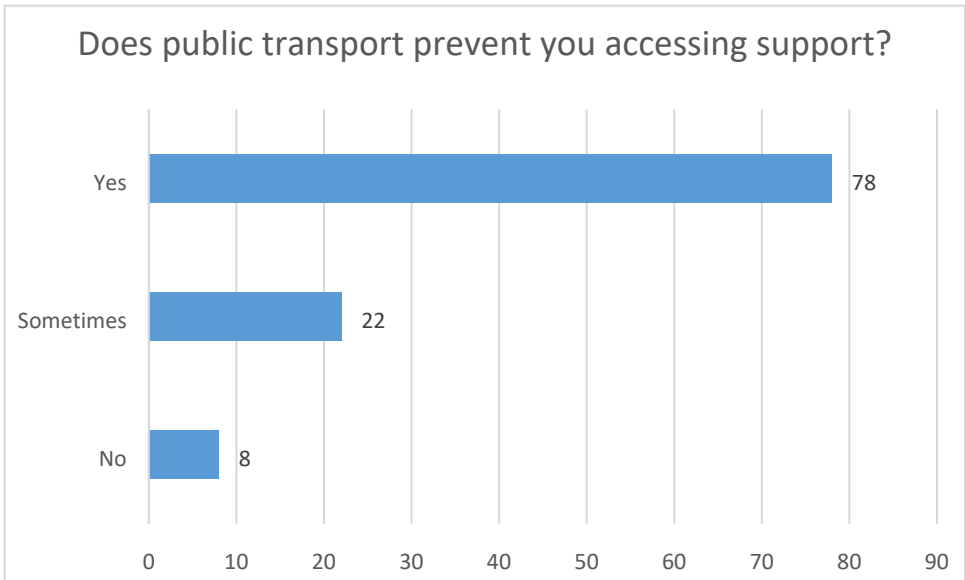
unsure and 4 said no.

53 people on the following table stated that there were no barriers for them accessing the internet or accessing support and support networks online. However that meant for the other half:



Responses covered in other in the above table were, not interested in accessing support online and really slow Wi-Fi being a hindrance.

99% of responses said they are able to receive support in the language of their choice.



Accommodation:



Flinshire’s response to this are a lot better than other authorities.

We then asked if they feel safe in their accommodation. Out of 110 answering this question, 11 said no, 19 said sometimes and 80 felt safe in their accommodation.

We then asked if they feel isolated in their accommodation and area they live? Out of the 111 that answered this question, 65 said no, 22 said sometimes and 24 felt isolated. The majority said living away from family and friends made them feel lonely and isolated, but they also shared that:

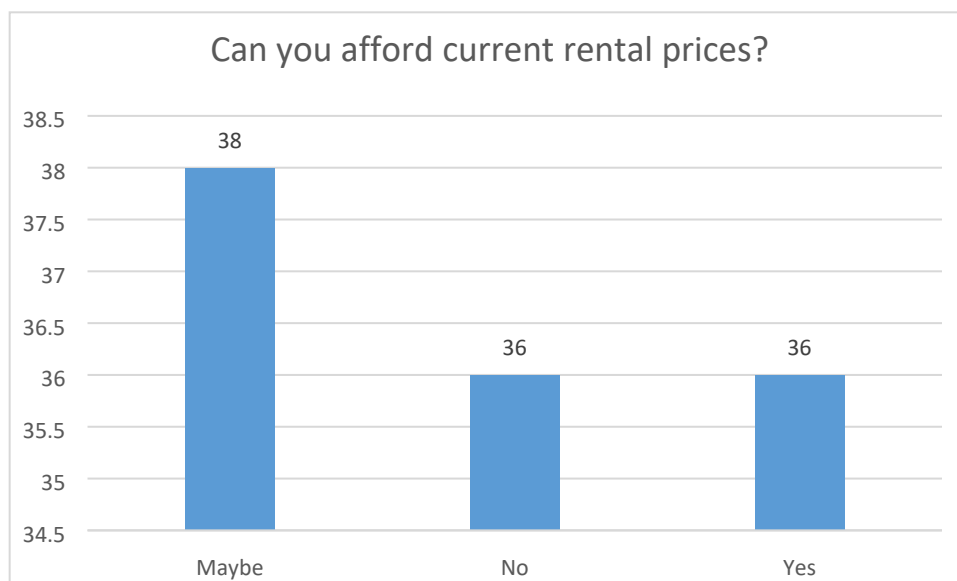
- All my friends are in another area
- Because I suffer with anxiety and depression I’ve got no family to support me where I am so I need to be by my family and my children so they can give me more support
- Because of the volatile situation with the neighbours who have used foul and abusive language towards me
- Condition of release cannot go back to family home
- Difficult to get to family due to travel, one bus stop, not reliable

- I feel lonely and isolated as I'm in safe accommodation so due to obvious reasons I can't have visitors , and my eldest daughter has issues with being around people in general and going out which means I spend a lot more time indoors alone too
- I feel lonely, isolated from friends and family and because they are so far away I am unable to do anything with them and they are not able to help me with my children. I cannot spend any time on my own, or doing anything that I want to do and do not see how living here, that could ever change. There are no regular bus routes, and it is a 30 minute walk to a major bus route that would get me to anywhere and with 4 children I do not feel that I am able to do this. I regularly left my door unlocked where I used to live but here I am checking my door 20 times a night and am scared to sleep without making sure all of the doors and windows are locked.
- I have moved in with my brother after living abroad for years. Relationship has become very strained and no longer happy living here. ACNEW are supporting with helping me move.
- I live with my partner and at times she is alone and the street appears to have a high level of crime and emergency response from the police
- I needed to be housed in a new area due to past situations so my support network was lost
- I think I should be fine as long as I do not socialise very much with the neighbourhood. However, the neighbours from above most times smoke cannabis in the building corridors at night and the smell comes into the flat, and when it bothers me most is when my daughter comes over the weekend to spend time with me.
- living in high rise flats I have always lived in a village surrounded by people
- lockdown has been hard
- My children do not currently live with me and they live 40 miles away.
- My husband passed away in 2018, I signed my home over to my daughter and she sold it and now wants to downsize. We don't have a good relationship anymore and I suffer with mental health. My anxiety and nerves are through the roof.
- My mobility is poor, currently reside in a top floor flat. Working towards a ground floor accommodation with my support worker - ACNEW
- my mum is going to evict me
- We do not have friendly relationships with any of our neighbours. We fear the house could be repossessed any given time by the landlord or the lock changed.

We then asked if they feel they are listened to by their support worker. 99 said yes, 10 said sometimes and 2 felt they were not listened to. Comments received were:

- I keep referring myself to mental health services but never gets anywhere. Council are being difficult over my bedroom tax questions.
- **Every person I have come in contact with has been excellent.**
- I had an excellent support worker but he moved.
- **In my case every person I have come in contact with have been so helpful and provided me with an excellent service.**
- It was just the time it took was so long and I never expected it would be so hard
- **Katrina has been such a great support in a very difficult time in my life. Nothing has been too much trouble and she deserves recognition. I have fought for an adapted house for five years and now my little boy has his dignity and privacy.**
- **So far the support network has been brilliant, they cannot do enough for me and my needs. I would feel better if they kept in contact with me more so I feel that I can reach out for support if and when needed**
- yes listened and remembers conversations

We asked looking forward to the future would you be able to afford a property in the area of your choice at current rental prices.



How does this affect their motivation to move on?

- Council housing would be affordable however if I was to rent privately the house prices are too high and not secure housing.
- Current private rental houses are too expensive. And there is no incentive to work whilst in supported accommodation due to rent being so high!
- Feel depressed, lonely and no hope of having a place of my own, because I am on benefits and will struggle to find landlords that accept benefits other than council or social housing. I am going on courses to help improve my CV to get a good job.
- Get just £180 every fortnight
- I am a single mother working part time currently. I don't think I would be able to afford the current rental prices in my area with the money I receive at the moment.
- I am currently on the sick and we are struggling to maintain home and our bills.
- I can't afford rental prices in the area, my mental health is poor because of lack of accommodation
- I do not feel that I have a great deal of motivation to move on. I was evicted in the middle of the first lockdown and got this house then and do not feel that I am happy here and that this is a healthy environment for either myself or my children. I am far away from family and friends and do not enjoy living here.
- I live on my own in my own home, I don't rent but if I had to I think cost would be an issue as I have very little savings and money from my pension is tight. Support worker is looking at ways I could increase my finances due to my deteriorating health.
- I plan to go to university and get a better paid job
- I would happily try to find private rent , but it's not affordable I think the council need to be looking at the price of renting and what they award in housing benefits because there is quite a lot on the rental market but there just not affordable for people who receive housing benefits, 3 bedroom houses are priced from £750pcm to £1000 pcm and housing benefits covers around £580 so the top up is not affordable
- it is affecting my MH, I live with my parents it is overcrowded, I just can't see a way forward
- Lack of affordable properties means I will be in refuge for longer due to waiting for council accommodation.
- Private rental for a house with my son's needs would be astronomical. He is severely disabled.
- rent in my area is dearer than social housing

- Renting is too expensive and I find local authority housing affordable and stable
- Rents are very high at the moment and I would be struggling to afford rent somewhere I wanted to live. Also there is a difference between private and council, with the security that each of these represent. A difficult question to answer accurately.
- the area of my choice is really expensive and the cost of living is expensive too, I would still try and do it but I would really struggle
- Whether I would be able to afford to live where I wanted to would depend on what support was available and I would also need to see what the landlord was allowed to charge. At present the rent charged is far in excess of the rent element paid and I am paying a lot of the benefit I am supposed to be living on topping up the excessive rent which should not be allowed to be charged.

We finished the questionnaire on asking if they had any other comments to add, our service users shared:

- currently in a cabin accommodation, would be better if had free Wi-Fi, own keys (although understand why not), do feel safe, cooking facilities or a kitchen we could use, thanks to all the staff here they all made me feel so welcome
- I am 90 yrs. old and live with my wife in our own home, we are accessing support as we want to remain at home and independent and not be separated.
- I am confident to ask my support officer for support when needed, in between weekly support checks already in place
- I am in a HMO and do not understand the bills and do not feel that this is very good value for money. I feel that there is a feeling that they can charge what they want and I am having to pay this and do not feel that this is sustainable. I am looking to get out into a 1 bed flat for the sake of my mental health. There should be a realistic rent that is charged, the current rent for my room is far too much for what it is but nothing seems to be being done about that.
- I am pleased someone is helping me and taking the time to get to know my situation and ways to help me stay in my own home. I would be upset if I had to leave as I have lived here for over 40+ years with my late wife.
- I don't know where I would be without support worker, she has helped me fill in forms, got me grants, talked with me and stayed on the phone when I have been worried.
- I feel from my personal opinion on how my application has gone etc. , that things that are out of my control i.e. your mistakes or when people have gone of sick and their caseloads having been picked up then it's only fair the waiting times should be back dated , for example I'm 6 months down the line on a band 4 when it clearly states on Flintshire website anyone fleeing domestic violence doesn't need a local connection and there for will be on band one , also when I was allocated a support homeless officer I was waiting weeks for her to except duty, calling an emailing her with no response she was off sick and didn't return to work so when someone else finally took her caseloads they excepting duty but it only went from that date and I feel this is very unfair
- I find the support I get from everyone excellent nothing is too much trouble for anyone
- I have known my support worker for several years and feel that he knows me better than most other people. I do feel that he listens to me but also feel that there are only so many options for me to explore and feel trapped by Covid, the lack of suitable housing, and the lack of childcare provision and do not feel hopeful about the future.
- I think there needs to be more support for children who don't qualify for flying start, it's really difficult to live in an area that offers no support for children.
- I would just like to say thank you to everyone involved that made our lives better. That also includes ray who has been wonderful and all of the council lads who have helped with other jobs they didn't have to do.
- Refuge has been massive help, I'm just waiting on been housed, hopefully soon, so can get back to normal, but wouldn't of done it without your help
- Service is marvellous! Delighted with the service and support I receive

- sleeping at friends sofa, I have health issues which affect my mobility so going up the stairs to use the bathroom is difficult and I struggle to get in and out of the bath and have to ask my friend to help me which is embarrassing
- Still waiting for a replacement support worker.
- Still waiting for some repairs from when I moved in 3 months ago, they would improve the housing if they were done.
- Thank you - I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you this place has saved my life!
- the support I get is good I feel I am listened too
- There are some repairs that need doing, and the garden needs clearing but otherwise the house is OK, I need floor coverings and this needs to be addressed before I will be happy with the house. Also there is very little storage. Very happy with the support I am receiving and would recommend them to anyone.
- We are grateful & thankful for all services who have helped in supporting dad and ourselves. We hope all services locally can continue for those who need it.
- We could not have received better help anywhere, and we are very grateful to FCC for all they have done for us.

Equalities Data for the responses:

	Age
16-24	7
25-34	14
35-44	10
45-54	12
55-64	6
65 and over?	20

White	66
Black	1
Prefer not to say	2

	Gender
Female	41
Male	27

	Gender changed since birth
No	63
Yes	5

	Disability
No	42
Yes	25
Prefer not to say	1

	Sexual Orientation
Bi-sexual	3
Heterosexual / straight	63
Prefer not to say	2

	Ethnicity stated
--	-------------------------

	Relationship status
--	----------------------------

Divorced	4
Married or same sex civil partnership	14
Other please specify	1
Single	37
Widow	7
Separated	3
Prefer not to say	2

No religion	13
Prefer not to say	11

	Pregnant
Does not apply to me	23
No	40
Yes	2

	Carer
Yes	7
No	61

	Religion stated
Christian	39
Atheist	3
Hindu	1
Other	1

	Preferred Language
Both Welsh and English	6
English	62
Welsh	2

APPENDIX 4

Housing Support Programme Strategy Questionnaire Summary

42 responses to the Provider Housing Support Programme Strategy Questionnaire were received by Flintshire. The responses are below:

Good awareness of what the HSG programme is in your LA?

- Twenty seven declared 'yes'.
- Eight responses declared 'no'.
- Six declared 'unsure'.

Easily accessible HSG for people to get support in your LA?

- Twenty three declared 'yes'.
- Two declared 'no'.
- Fifteen believed that the service 'could be improved'.
- One individual did not comment on this question.

How should we tackle increasing awareness of HSG?

- Thirteen suggested 'local'.
- Four suggested 'regional'.
- Twenty three suggested 'both, local and regional'.
- One individual did not comment on this question.

Will customers be given a choice of how they receive support?

- Thirty four declared 'yes'.
- Zero responses declared 'no'.
- Six admitted that they were 'unsure'.
- One individual did not comment on this question.

Are you able to provide the same quality of support prior to covid?

- Twenty six declared 'yes'.
- Two declared 'no'.
- Twelve declared 'sometimes'.
- One individual did not comment on this question.

Is there an increase in complex cases resulting in crisis intervention?

- Thirty three declared 'yes'.
- Four declared 'no'.
- Three declared 'sometimes'.
- One individual did not comment on this question.

How is the increase in MH impacting on you as a provider?

- Even though some individuals may be engaging with mental health services, we seem to be filling in the gaps whilst individual is waiting to be seen or are not being listened to with regards to medication. They want to talk rather than be on medication.
- Impact on staff resilience Can be more difficult to address housing needs if there are many complex needs Providing more support in areas that previously statutory agencies would be involved

- Lack of access to mental health teams has put staff under extreme pressure when supporting. Looking at models in other LA's in England - teams have direct fast track referrals route ways and have staff placed with teams to resolve issues and provide the support on the ground.
- There has been many increased mental health cases and would prefer more mental health services support from local mental health teams.
- Everything feels intensified and the above is having an impact on the service. We support people to the best of our ability and have a robust staff wellbeing system in place that is monitored by senior management as the impact is mainly on the staff and the overwhelming issues they are presented with more often.
- Staff are dealing with issues that trained mental health professionals should be addressing. Clients are being supported whilst they wait for appointments and assessments with statutory health services. These clients can be very demanding as the pandemic has increased anxiety levels and this takes its toll on staff and admin support. Staff are dealing with higher levels of client's self-harming/threatening suicide. Increasing levels of debt and complex welfare benefit problems, as well as immigration issues are being referred - projects at a low level are not supposed to be able to deal with specialist issues and yet there are no other services often available to do so, or they have long waiting lists.
- As a residential service, the team have been continuing to provide face to face support throughout. Whilst other agencies have not been doing this, this has led to individuals not receiving the same support from statutory services, which in turn has meant that support staff were sometimes "left" to try and manage these complexities. This can lead to more stress and pressure on staff.
- My clients are finding it extremely difficult to get appointments with GP, and community mental health services. They are being sent out letters asking them to attend appointments in five weeks' time for example, which often results in missed appointments due to either not remembering, feeling as though it's too far away and the service doesn't care. As a provider we try to help arrange the appointments for them, but sometimes it is not possible unless we are with the client, which isn't usually possible if for example the GP requires us to phone up at 8am. This impacts us as a provider as we are having to try and help as much as we can with their mental health, but aren't really trained to give this type of support.
- Within our Refuge provision, we have faced many challenges with clients accessing support when their lead need appears to be Mental Health. Domestic abuse is present and undoubtable they require support to address the impact, however, this has proven difficult whilst addressing and trying to engage with the MH team.
- Loss of employment.
- Often more time need to be spent on each client. Very complex issues coming though and some clients with several complex issues. A lot of referrals coming though where we are also needing to use language line. Some of these with complex needs and MH issues so can often take the time of 3-4 other clients combined. It can help slightly working from home as this works well for most clients, and frees up more time (no travelling, no wasted time when clients are out or miss appointments etc.).
- Sessions are taking longer and clients have higher levels of anxieties
- We are currently working with a lot of tenants with mental health issues.
- Due to the increase in clients presenting with mental health issues and lack of funding and support, we are provided basic mental health support to clients
- I am unsure if covid has impacted on my SU MH however I do feel that the tenants we work with needs are becoming more complex which can have an impact on providers knowing how to support them.
- Residents have to be reminded to wear face masks, hand sanitizer available around the project for residents to use.
- Residents not always using sanitizer and masks. Reminded constantly for both their own protection and staffs. Sanitizer is placed in various stations around the project.

- Since the pandemic there has not been as much stuff to go to for residents due to the course of the pandemic.
- People are having to wait longer to access services (or are limited to tel contact for example with GP) - this leads to a build-up of frustration and increasing issues incl increased substance misuse.
- Increased number of clients suffering with mental health issues who are not under or being supported by mental health services. Difficulty with accessing some services face to face.
- All services have additional pressures and an increase in waiting lists for support this has meant an increase in support each person requires which then reduced the number that can be supported and supported well.
- Pre-pandemic mental health was a contributing factor for many complex clients. Awaiting the full impact as landlords are increasingly able to serve eviction notices.
- Caseloads require more in-depth attention which impacts on time spent throughout the project. Due to the complex needs of each individual more training in this area is needed due to the high increase in the mental health and wellbeing of adults and children and a quicker response on sign posting individuals to relevant agencies. A care plan would be beneficial to keep on file to be able to support individuals whilst residing at the project and guidance in handling individuals who have a diagnosis maybe with a personality disorder, bipolar and even schizophrenic. Responsibility of re-homing families throughout Flintshire who the majority have failed the first time who present with the above and more takes time to earn trust and time which can be limited and then either no response or late response from outside agencies makes the position at the project difficult as we work to criteria's also.
- We have seen many residents' mental health and wellbeing being affected by the pandemic. Some residents have really struggled with not seeing mental health support agencies face to face.
- We are stretched currently as people coming into the service do present with more than one lead need and high support needs around Mental Health, staff have some training but not as much as they feel they want or need. We also have at least 80% of residents in the various schemes with high needs around Mental Health, we have never had it this high in previous years. We have more and more complex residents who have lots of Mental Health issues which impacts on other service users, staff time, resources etc.
- We are providing additional support
- Stretching our resources, especially as our outreach referrals are meant to have low support needs.
- There have been increase in conflict on site, along with an increased demand for support for tenants with complex needs that seems to go beyond the services offered on the project. This has meant an increased workload for staff that can impact on our ability to give adequate support to all tenants on site, as our direction is often diverted to resolving conflict and dealing with the incidents that arise from tenants with complex needs that we are struggling to accommodate. Police have had to frequently attend the site in order to support staff with ongoing issues, which results in a negative environment for the residents and staff.
- The impact on the project where I work has resulted in a huge increase in conflict between different tenants and negative interactions towards staff from these tenants. This has resulted in staff requiring more police help/intervention. This has also had an impact on staff regarding feelings of personal safety at work and has also negatively impacted on feelings of work related stress The increased amount of support and conflict resolution required has also hugely impacted negatively on work load and there are many times that tenants are not fully supported due to on site incidents involving other tenants that stop staff supporting people whose support needs are, at that time, not as paramount however they are equally as important to the person. I feel that this increase in work load is not recognised and that due to the increase of such negative incidents on site requiring police and/or social services intervention, that staff are deemed as not able to deal with such incidents or are not qualified to when in reality this is not the case - the increase in workload has not been met by an increase in staffing numbers.

- Staff are under a great deal of pressure to deliver the company goals while faced with a greater and sometimes unknown/undiagnosed support need from multiple residents. Staff can't always lone work due to the variation of complexes in the same building so a greater strain is felt as rotas are amended to support staff on duty by bringing in additional staff.
- Multiple needs cases are challenging to move forwards with covid restrictions on accessing other service areas
- More challenging behaviours in the workplace
- There is not enough support for mental health, refuge staff are unable to provide the support needed for a mental health patients appropriately.
- Making support a lot more difficult and at a rapid unsustainable pace
- An increase in challenging clients, people generally seem more volatile.
- We have seen our clients withdraw and reduce engagement with services. With well-being levels lowering, so have basic care requirements such as personal hygiene and housekeeping levels.
- We struggle to gain the appropriate support needed due to remote working and the strain on the service in general. More training to help understand some of the more complex issues that have been identified during these difficult times is needed.
- The cases are taking longer and the level of support is greater. Need to get to the route causes and ensure basic needs are met first before and support can be provided.
- We are struggling to manage complex clients in temporary accommodation as it is not suitable accommodation for clients with multiple and complex support needs. We have a real lack of suitable supported and temporary accommodation for clients with mental health issues. We do not get any support from the mental health service to support these clients in TA.
- Two individuals did not comment on this question.

What trends have you seen emerge since Covid-19 pandemic?

- Family disputes
- More cases not sustaining TA due to mental ill health and lack of understanding from that service with engagement with these cohort groups. Lack of services face to face contact and not being consistent. Feels like there's never a set plan and there has become a generalised way of dealing with homeless citizens. We have seen a rise in the number of self-neglect meetings, prevention of death meetings, safeguarding and general MDTs called by support staff to pull agencies.
- Increase mental health issues
- For the Refuge part of the organisation we have seen such a demand for our individual units, due to people being unable to access communal settings. We are receiving such complex referrals where DA is present but may not at that point be the lead need. This can make our support ineffective at that time.
- See above, clients being supported in the way they want - when and how they want to receive support. Staff happy at the success of remote working - time and journeys saved, engagement at good levels.
- More phone contact from other agencies rather than previous face to face contact with clients.
- Extreme high levels of abuse and violence, including perpetrators using covid - 19 and the fear of contracting the virus as a controlling tool.
- Initially service was quieter following the Covid-19 pandemic but the need for housing support has now increased, and is more than ever before. We are seeing more people in problem debt with their housing, and have been struggling to get the support that they need. Many more people presenting with mental health.
- Loss of employment
- More clients needing translation. More MH issues. Financial struggles for clients who would not previously have needed services.

- More child on parent abuse, more complex needs, more mental health issues, more examples of cohesive control. Greater levels of isolation and extra stress due to childcare. More people requiring emergency funding for food, clothes etc.
- Tenants have become a lot needier but in all honesty none of them believed in covid so we had a struggle with ppe being worn when entering the office.
- I feel that there are no new rents, but that once that were unrecognised are not being recognise.
- Children not attending school and parents failing to send children in when they could have done has had an impact on the tenants and also on safeguarding as the children have spent more time on site
- Residents reluctant to engage in support face to face, they tend to spend most of their time in their rooms.
- Residents not always happy to engage face to face and spend more time in their own room sometimes with others, sometimes alone.
- Increase in drug use. Infecting resident's mental health.
- Increased frustration. Lack of motivation to get out and attend community events, after so long not being able to. Increased substance misuse. Very long waiting times for properties.
- Some reluctance to re-start social activities and groups and gain interaction with others. Increased number of hoarding cases which could require more specialist support. Decline in many service users property condition also.
- Increase in private rents making it very difficult for people to afford any housing. Increase in waiting lists for services Increase in the waiting list for the housing register. Reduction/increased time taken to get properties from voids to get people moving, rapid rehousing is anything but.
- Awaiting the full impact as landlords are increasingly able to serve eviction notices.
- Long waits for appointments with all agencies, remote working by agencies for residents who some have mental health issues and don't understand or like this form of meeting which impacts on their benefits, DR's, Dentist etc. Residents stagnant even though ready to move on however unable to due to property not being offered, ready for them. DAF wait too long having moved into properties leaving families without necessary items. Outside agencies reliant on individual residents to be honest important issues needing to be recognised by staff and highlighted with no visits from health visitors which would be missed if staff were not vigilant and putting one of their many heads on with everyone being remote, putting immense pressure on the staff and their manager not to fail the project and the people who live here.
- We did see a rise in families whereby their engagement decreased. Some families discussed their apprehension of moving into the community. Feelings of isolation and increase in mental health issues.
- More people with Mental Health issues More chaotic referrals - we are taking people who we would not in the past have had referred to us, this I feel is due to getting people off the streets and into any accommodation possible - that then puts a lot of pressure on the provider to just "get on with it and manage the situation" as there have been no real consequences to poor unmanageable behaviour etc. while in the pandemic.
- We have seen more mental health within our project
- Increase substance mis use, debt, lack of self-care such as not eating properly
- There has been an increase in tenants with mental health issues as well as substance misuse taking place on the project. Bad behaviour on site and poor attitudes towards staff seems to be a worrying trend, which has been difficult to deal with due to the no eviction policy which has meant that tenants have not faced consequences and have no incentive to follow project rules.
- Increased tenants with more than one mental health diagnoses. Increased tenants with substance misuse issues. Increased tenants with mental health comorbid with substance misuse issues. Increased child protection referrals due to the above. Increased conflict between tenants requiring intervention. Tenants being aware of non-evictions has seemingly resulted in an increase of negative verbal and physical behaviour/threats towards staff.

- Residents who are ready to move on are unable to as there isn't the properties available. Residents who have been encouraged to stay isolated in their own properties during the pandemic are now reluctant to mix together now rules have relaxed. Loneliness, lack of contact with friends and family are becoming a major obstacle with supporting them.
- Longer stays of service users at refuge accommodation
- An increase in people coming through the door for our services.
- Lack of regard for project rules due to no consequences. People are aware of covid rules but only a minority abide by the rules e.g. social distancing, wearing a mask etc.
- We have seen a reduction in service charge payments being met.
- Unable to gain face to face appointments. Difficult to arrange appointments due to many agencies remote working. Long waiting times to gain support required. Move on was stagnant so people who were ready to move into the community after completing the support plans remained here. Long waits for property due to voids taking longer than usual to complete. DAF white goods taking 3-4 weeks to arrive with resident causing hardship due to having no cooking facilities or laundry facilities.
- Need basic need support, access to food, gas and electric top ups, support to speak to energy providers.
- 5 individuals did not comment on this question.

Are these trends still prevalent now?

- Thirty three declared 'yes'.
- Four declared 'no'.
- Four individuals did not comment on this question.

What are the main issues you face regarding move on?

- Not being suitable for an individual and their needs
- Accommodation - brick and mortar - not enough of the sort of accommodation needed eg one bed accommodation, supported accommodation
- Properties and mental health pathways are not strong enough to support citizens in a person centred way.
- lack of social housing
- Social housing seems to be taking a really long time, however is understandable following the pandemic etc. This results in people being in refuge longer than needed, blocking people in crisis being able to access the refuge when the risk is high.
- Lack of suitable accommodation. Affordability. Client not deemed in need of housing by provider.
- Lack of suitable move on accommodation. Difficulty obtaining furniture etc. in time for move on. Could possibly do with more floating support once clients to move on.
- Not many rapid re-housing properties being offered. Service users are moved from shared temp accomm, to one bedroom temp accomm then have to move again if they're offered somewhere later down the line. Several moves can be unsettling, stressful and traumatic for some. Would be better if they were moved on from their original temp accomm.
- Struggle to accommodate clients experiencing mental health and whom require 24 hour support
- Moving back to a face-to-face service.
- Sometimes difficult to find continuing lower level support and some clients need repeated support. We have welcomed being able to re-open clients within 6 months without full referral process.
- Lack of accommodation, suitability of clients for refuge, often referrals are to suitable for a Domestic Abuse service, this does not become obvious until they have been accepted into refuge.
- Lack of properties especially 2 bedroom ones

- Lack of affordable housing and Properties.
- At present accommodation actually being ready to move in when offered to our tenants is having an impact on them, staff chasing housing and offering additional emotional support to tenants and also bed blocking at the site
- There are not enough accommodation available in the area
- There are not enough move on accommodation for residents to move onto. They do not want shared houses.
- Not enough move on accommodation for over 25s.
- Lack of properties, long time for maintenance issues to be dealt with, and so longer voids.
- Difficulty to gain carpets/flooring for people on a low income. Removals having to be arranged with very little notice putting tenants at risk of building up debt before even moving into a property.
- Increase in costs Managing expectations
- Length of time between successful move on application, allocation and tenancy start date. Lack of available housing stock and possibly due to covid restrictions and maintenance / refurb schedules.
- People not wanting to move out as they become too comfortable. 2. Properties are not offered due to FCC and housing associations not being able to evict or complete work on offered properties. 3. Move on panels cannot meet as they used to and are done remote taking longer to come to decisions, then properties are not there to be offered causing back log.
- Lack of housing Affordability of private rent Residents not meeting the criteria for private rent is not having a working guarantor Time scale of residents being offered property and then waiting for repairs to be completed Residents are reluctant to explore private rental properties due to lack of housing security. Many have had bad experiences with private landlords.
- Not enough suitable move on accommodation, so we are bed blocking in hostels / schemes Residents are staying in schemes longer than they ever did as they present with more than one lead need and very complex issues, especially around behaviour and not paying rent. Due to the length of time it takes for people to move on when they are ready to move, the knock on effect for some is that they then go backwards, get in with the wrong crowd, stop paying rent or in some schemes they give in to peer pressure and go back to substance misuse. had they have moved on when ready they would have had a fresh start with staff support and be in own accommodation and not shared so temptation would not have been as strong maybe.
- Lack of single person accommodation there seems to be a lot of new builds however they are for over 55's
- Lack of move on accommodation, tenants having debts and M/H issues
- There are long wait times for houses once tenants have been offered properties, as well as poor communication- tenants can sometimes go weeks without hearing anything.
- Tenants not engaging in support or wishing to address their issues. Waiting times for housing. Lack of communication with other services regarding housing.
- Additional support requirements increased. Lack of appropriate premises to move on to. Young people who require additional support are restricted in accessing it as there isn't the provision of accommodation available.
- Lack of suitable move on accommodation
- Clients ready to move on and no properties available for them to move in resulting in refuge being full and other potential clients needed refuge unable to access.
- A lack of accommodation
- Delays with move on property.
- Residents have become comfortable in their temporary housing and are reluctant to move out into the community independently.
- Long delays on moving people on due to shortage of properties, time taken to turnaround voids.
- That loss of the support needs are complex and are taking longer

- Lack of suitable accommodation for clients with multiple and complex support needs - they are being refused as their needs are too high or risk is too high. Not enough accommodation for single people. Not enough affordable accommodation in the local area. Too many barriers to accessing accommodation such as needing to be working or have a guarantor.
- Three individuals did not comment on this question.

What issues have been encountered from Housing Options Team?

- Yes - unsuitable properties and setting up individuals to fail as they are either inexperienced at living independently or don't have the necessary skills.
- Properties are in short supply. Housing First has not been allocated a property for over 6 months. Denbighshire Housing and Cartefi Conwy has supplied the most properties so far over the period of the contract but still not the number committed too in the Welsh Government charter.
- No social housing available Private rental sector- many barrier clients face due to not able to take benefits, low income, high rental charges, no guarantor
- There is no consistency across the counties, all procedures are different, which can complicate things. Then referrals get missed, extended the 56 waiting period. Also, legislation states that people in Refuge should be in band 1, this doesn't always happen, staff have to consistently challenge to move from 2 to 1.
- Sometimes information about the move on accommodation is minimal which causes anxiety for clients. Some clients have mentioned that they don't feel they have enough contact with their housing officer.
- Temporary accommodation officers are brilliant, always there at time of need for clients. However, housing options team have poor communication with clients. I believe this is because they are managing a high caseload. More meaningful work could take place if staff had less clients.
- As above, Struggle to accommodate clients experiencing mental health and whom require 24 hour support.
- Yes, there are three separate teams working in one office. I was told by HSG that the service team must ask for the homelessness team - my service user had been inadvertently making a social housing application. The service user was left going around in circles. It is more complex than it needs to be.
- Sometimes lack of contact or waiting a long time for a response from housing options, however understood they have been under an enormous amount of pressure
- Housing options seem to pass a lot of people over to housing support without staying involved. Housing options also seem rushed off their feet. I think that housing support teams within LA's often are in the loop but outside agencies delivering housing support are often not filled in on changes within housing department, staff changes etc. and often find things out by chance rather than being fully informed. Has been harder to get hold of people in some cases.
- Long delays in properties being ready to move into due to shortage of materials. Also lack of communication from the housing officers.
- Main issues have been as above and updates being given to us and the tenant we are constantly chasing for info as tenants are left in limbo
- Since lock down, time appears to have stood still and residents reluctant to move on
- Not enough suitable properties in the area.
- The residents that have moved on since I have been working at the project there has been no issues.
- Can at times be difficult to get hold of. Some properties being allocated that are not appropriate for a service user specifically relating to medical needs.
- Increase in the waiting list for the housing register. Reduction/increased time taken to get properties from voids to get people moving, rapid rehousing is anything but.

- Move on panel appears to sit less frequently or decisions take a little longer due to covid restrictions Lack of available housing stock and possibly due to covid restrictions and maintenance / refurb schedules
- Issues that have arisen are lack of communication from the offer of a property and the residents being given excuse after excuse as to why their property is not ready this is after 12 weeks and then being told this could take at least another 8 weeks depending on condition of the property. Lack of properties available which extends the stay of the resident.
- Lack of communication has been an issue on occasion. This was in relation to a timescale of residents being offered accommodation and when they are actually able to move in.
- Lack of suitable move on Lack of move on to peoples preferred areas Barriers to moving on due to resident having previous rent arrears / debts from other accommodation. When move on identified and the offer made to the client they can then wait a long time to actually move in - this can be waiting for repairs to be done, Housing officers on leave / sick leave etc. - when a delay in moving out happens the room/ flat is bed blocked and referrals that have been accepted for that room then have to go on hold too.
- Suitable move on accommodation- a lot of accommodation is centred towards the elderly
- Contact issues- due to working from home and staffing issues it seems to have gotten a lot harder to get necessary information.
- Time taken to move into a property after being told that they were successful for Move On can be very long - however it is understood that this is due to supply issues with building materials.
- Lack of move on forever homes following leaving supported living and outreach
- Contact issues
- The pace of work has increased made more challenging due to PPE, some services not leaving homes and we soaking up their roles.
- Lack of available properties due to the 'rapid response' strategy Implemented in Flintshire
- Long delays on moving people on due to shortage of suitable properties and time taken for a property to be released once one is identified.
- Three individual advised 'no'.
- One individual advised 'yes'.
- Eight individuals did not comment on this question.

Are you having issues with recruitment? Or have had in past 12 months?

- Eighteen declared 'yes'.
- Thirteen declared 'no'.
- Six declared 'Not needed to recruit in the past 12 months'.
- Four individuals did not comment on this question.

Reason for recruitment issues?

- Pay more people wanting to work from home.
- Short term contracts, low paid salaries in relation to the nature of the work. You can earn more in less exposed jobs. Homelessness can burn staff out quickly if not supported with clinical supervision - Housing First is lucky to at least have that. But currently I have staff who have worked on the frontline since the start of the pandemic and with the most complex cases that homelessness has but yet they only have 6 months left on their contracts.
- There doesn't seem to be a lot of people applying, which is highly unusual, do not know why? But know it is happening across all fields of work.
- Possibly people looking for opportunities to work from home. Pay possibly Not enough awareness of the work
- No interest in the role, perhaps due to low pay of support worker roles.
- Due to lockdown we haven't really had the spaces to recruit residents
- Due to covid no move on was available. It would have been unsafe to move residents on.

- Due to the pandemic we found out that there was not much going for residents
- Salary, lack of experienced applicants.
- Suitable staff not applying due to minimum wage. Retaining staff due to minimum wage being increased leaving the gap between positions negligible for the responsibilities of some staff.
- Perhaps people are reluctant to embark on employment that is face to face and not flexible in terms on remote working.
- People are fearful of job insecurity.
- Too many staff join following on from university without Life Skills and become disillusioned by the behaviour of the residents they are supporting.
- Lack of suitable people applying for the roles. Lots of unemployed people applying for roles on websites like Indeed but not really wanting the job, they often don't turn up for interview or turn up not even knowing what the job is as they have to apply for a certain amount of jobs to keep benefits, they also accept jobs but then don't take them up as they say it's not "financially " worth it - we do pay a good wage so it's not the salary we are offering that's at fault.
- Stress with dealing with the tenants, contract changes, low pay-staff having to work overtime to get a better wage, then taxed heavily by the government.
- Unless... jobs are advertised, just little interest or people not suitable for the job.
- Twenty three individuals did not comment on this question.

What do you think are the current gaps in housing support and homeless provision?

- Compassion, empathy, direction, support, inappropriate and unsuitable housing.
- Homelessness needs properties to move people on to - keeping people in TA for lengthy periods of time isn't working or solving the problem. Assertive outreach teams for rough sleepers separate from the statutory homeless service.
- Social housing, affordable private rentals
- Unfortunately the lack of social housing is the main issue, which is not something that can be rectified overnight. There should be more move on accommodation for people leaving crisis accommodation, ready to move on. This would then free up the crisis bed spaces for people in need. Low level support can then be provided around tenancy maintenance to prevent future issues and becoming back involved in homelessness.
- Mental health needs training for support staff. Specialist services to deal with mental health issues who also have housing/homelessness issues. Domestic violence training for support staff.
- Need for more long term supported accommodation, especially for those who have used substances for a long time and are getting older. Accommodation to enable projects like Rapid Rehousing to be possible Possibly more floating support
- More suitable accommodation is needed e.g. more one bedroom properties rather than a chaotic shared building with 12 unstable clients all bunched in one place.
- Mental Health facilities especially for those with dual needs
- I don't think that people should be in dire straits before they receive support under homelessness provision - some sort of emergency support. Less waiting times.
- Long term support and the ability to dip in and out easier for the many that need this. Enabling clients is our aim but this is sometimes not possible for some clients.
- We have had a 40% increase in referrals there are not enough staff to deal with the increase. Support for CYP, there are long waiting lists as CYPMHS etc. are full
- People still working from home
- Lack of education and support around the process due to it being complete.
- Specialist MH services for tenants, maybe smaller units as not all do well in large units and PIE approach is easier to work with tenants in more homely environments. A halfway house for tenants who may need a few days away from the project when things are going on there to get

them away from a situation or even to allow them to be able to avoid having to leave, similar to a respite type accommodation

- Not enough supported living accommodation for residents with learning disabilities
- Mental health needs further priority, along with drugs and alcohol.
- I find that there is not much move on options for residents.
- The length of time between someone engaging with support, and then being allocated a property. Occasional lack of joined up working amongst services.
- Hoarding Officer per authority. Debt Officer, Benefit appeals - PIP etc.
- Additional support for the complex cases. Mental health we have an excellent support but they are only 1 person. Additional support with substances due to increased waiting times for NHS services
- Lack of available housing stock
- Lack of properties and size of properties on offer.
- Singles provisions LGBTQ+ provisions Provisions for residents whom will never be able to hold a tenancy without ongoing intense support
- Not enough hostels, Supported Living Accommodations available We need provision that could take people with very high support needs who could stay well over the 2yrs as needs they have / present with are so complex and will need more staff support to get them ready for independent living. More schemes that specialize in Mental Health More schemes that are smaller and can take complex needs - small schemes are better as the staff can do more intense work with smaller groups, behavioral issues don't impact on as many other residents in a smaller scheme etc. - when I say a smaller scheme I think beds of 4-6 at most with full 24/7 support from staff - right staffing levels so double cover and either a wake or wake and sleep depending on the needs of the people being accommodated
- Here in Flintshire we have all area's covered we also offer ongoing support when our tenants move to their forever homes
- Single and shared accommodation for move on, complex needs accommodation
- Affordable housing for young people who want to contribute to society by working but would then be ineligible for Housing Benefit. More floating support to be offered to young people for longer (if needed) when they move into their own homes. To help prevent young people failing once they are living independently would help break the cycle of homelessness.
- More specialist provision required - project workers dealing with more complex issues
- Move on accommodation and supported accommodation
- Property shortage, move on delays due to shortage of materials, staff isolating etc.
- 1 bedroom accommodation.
- Lack of parent and baby placements Lack of supported accommodation for vulnerable people more night stops Family supported accommodations
- It needs to be more holistic, support services need to work together more
- Five individuals did not comment on this question.
- Three individuals advised that they were 'unsure'.

What do you think your local authority should prioritise in HSG Strategy?

- Suitable housing options for individuals with relevant, wrap around support
- Suitable accommodation for rapid rehousing Floating support
- Intensive support provision for complex cases. Rough sleeper assertive outreach package - we need the right teams supporting citizens to access for assessments for TA.
- A more structured form of move on: As mentioned previously people are presenting with far more MH issues and accessing crisis accommodation, a move on phase would allow further support around tenancy maintenance. After receiving such intensive support, independent accommodation can be overwhelming and a huge step for people. This would then in turn could prevent homelessness occurring again.

- See above, long term support for clients who will always need to dip in and out of accessing a service which can reassure them and assist them as and when issues arise. Crisis support for those clients who cannot wait to access a service via a Gateway or waiting list and need help to stabilize/prevent a situation worsening, before accessing longer term support.
- Homeless services Supported accommodation
- Getting referrals sent to us sooner. Often our referrals are received too late, and our prison leavers have already been released with lack of support and feel left behind by the time we manage to reach them.
- Services to address mental health / dual needs
- Views of clients and front line staff.
- Long term funding, CYP funding
- Providing housing for our move on tenants so we can get people in who need support.
- Mental Health awareness/ training, PIE services
- Maybe look into more supported living accommodation for learning disabilities
- As above, more in depth support needed for mental health, drugs and alcohol.
- More move on flats for residents.
- A range of support approaches, including but not exclusively rapid rehousing. PIE training for all staff.
- Hoarding Officer and Officers who can deal with complex debt issues and Benefit appeals
- Continue as they are with the level of support staff but if possible extra specialist support that could help the current staff with complex cases.
- HSG would benefit from working closely with projects having a better insight into the people and families that they are providing for now and in the future. Education on running your own property and reality on incoming and outgoing costs so that future tenants have a more realistic insight into being out in the community. A longer period of working with projects supporting the homeless would be beneficial on both sides.
- Increase the amount of affordable and secure housing
- More provision for more complex needs more provision for longer stay - more entrenched behaviors etc. More move on provision More provision for Prison leavers - so this could be a hostel that takes just prison leavers when they come out of prison, they get assessed quickly, they then get the correct support put in place and then they move into suitable accommodation within 2 months so that could be to own accommodation, into hostels, into complex needs accommodation, back with family when some mediation with family is done etc. provision that is like "time out" so anyone in a scheme that has caused disruption etc. which might have meant eviction in the past could go to and more intense support could be put in to address behaviors, help with a mental health or drug issue etc. then return to the scheme or other suitable accommodation.
- Single and shared accommodation for move on, recruiting support workers
- Improved referrals and background checks on potential tenants coming to the project and the option to refuse unsuitable candidates.
- More support staff, dedicated housing stock in a community setting, more affordable one bedroom properties.
- Giving household essentials
- Supported accommodation for ex-offenders.
- Affordable housing- there are not enough affordable private rental properties. Housing stock- there seems to be a shortage of social housing available throughout the county. Supported accommodations - supported housing can offer the help and advice needed, but a lot of the issues residents present with are not just housing related. Agencies could work with HSG at their projects.
- Need to look more at the Private rented sector and the support that is available for both tenants and landlords.
- Two individuals advised that they were 'unsure'.

- 11 individuals did not comment on this question.

Why is your service PIE informed?

- We work with individuals, they inform the service they want and their needs considered and met
- We have a dedicated team Reflective practice sessions for staff PIE and TIC mandatory training Pizzaz assessment to monitor how PIE the service is
- Housing First has 10 set principles and PIE is one. The principles states - the service is delivered in a psychologically- informed, trauma-informed, gender informed way that is sensitive and aware of protected characteristics.
- We are currently undergoing trauma informed training through safe lives. This is intensive training around psychological theories and frameworks that are used to benefit the people we support and help staff understand how they think or behave given a set of experiences and environmental factors. All staff are also trained around ACE's and the impact this can have on a person's life.
- All staff have received training via Cymorth and the importance of this is regularly discussed.
- We have a dedicated team who are supporting the organization, projects and staff to work in a PIE way. The PIE training is mandatory for all staff along with the Trauma Informed Care As an organization we are working to implement the PIE evaluation programme to improve each service.
- I believe our service is psychologically informed as we are very client led. I am flexible in the sense that I allow the clients to choose the day and time of their appointment. This helps them to feel that their opinion matters and they are heard. We build strong relationships with the clients building trust, being there for them when THEY need it, and not just when we say they have an appointment. Clients also have the choice of the location of their appointments e.g. home visit or in the office. We understand the stress and anxiety is May because someone to have to travel to an appointment, so often they like the fact we are willing to conduct home visits to them instead. We run a wellbeing group whereby we go on walks to give the clients something to look forward to, keep active and get outdoors without having to worry about completing forms and paying bills etc. like their usual appointment consists of.
- In both refuge and community provisions we support clients on an individual basis tailored to their needs wants and wishes.
- We adapt the level of service to the needs of the end user, and have a range of ways in which the user can contact us for support, such as webchat, emails, telephone etc. We are able to switch channel easily. Good links with a range of local providers. Workforce have regular Support & Supervision meetings and supervisor is always available to answer queries or provide support.
- Most staff are nonjudgmental and would always try to gain trust of client and make allowances for issues we are aware of that may affect client. We have previously been told by SP Team that we must close cases quickly if clients don't engage or stop engaging (even where there could be damaging consequences) but this can go against what we have learned in PIE training. Using innovative ways of making contact and showing empathy and understanding towards clients and the issues they are faced with.
- All staff are trained to deliver therapeutic support. We offer a holistic service which we tailored to the individual's needs, we offer group programs, CYP and child/parent programs which take a whole family approach.
- I haven't done the PIE training yet so not the best person to ask.
- Staff work with a person centered approach based on tenant's wants/ needs and adapt their style to suit the tenant. The physical appearance is not PIE however we have started to put changes in place to make the service more SU friendly
- Working with our residents and having a none judgmental approach helps residents to engage in support

- As a housing association I feel that staff have a more caring attitude towards residents in their time of trauma/chaos/vulnerability, and feel that this comes across on many levels
- In the project we find the care aspect helps in the work place and they open up more to staff.
- Manager has been on PIE training and embraced the principles, which have been cascaded down to staff. Time is given for regular reflective practice. Emphasis on relationship building in support. Support is person centered. Efforts made to make office a psychologically informed physical space.
- Not Applicable - Unable to gain the relevant training.
- Staff have been trained in principles and are informed enough to consider multiple influencing factors of a client's presentation and strengths and needs. This helps to reduce stress, possible opportunities for conflict and increases the probability for trust, therapeutic relationship and positive outcomes
- Person centered environment although we offer temporary accommodation as a project we offer support in all areas. The project offers support in-house however recognizes the importance of liaising with outside agencies to get the best outcome for the individual. The project respects the individual and their lifestyle choices and encourages progress and embraces new ideas and as long as ideas are appropriate and relevant to the progress of the project and individual it supports and encourages freedom of choice and tries to adapt to help each resident and their family to achieve their goals.
- Staff are trained in Path PIE Implementation of skills and wellbeing plans Implementation of wellbeing sessions Being aware of trauma/ACE's and how we can best support our residents Treating residents with empathy and dignity No evictions
- This is a work in progress, we are currently transitioning over to PIE we offer support that's person centered we are currently overhauling our buildings to make them more PIE or moving to new schemes if we cannot achieve this in the building we are in.
- We have been for many years as we believe this empowers the service user's and also allows them choices
- As a complex needs project, we always try to look outside the box to get the person to make their own choices to benefit themselves.
- We tailor our support approach to every resident.
- Our support is totally tailored towards the person including where support sessions take place as some tenants do not engage well in support sessions in formal settings.
- We set boundaries but within those boundaries actions and consequences play a dominant role. We show by example and aim to explain why the right course of action is what it is.
- Detailed extensive referral process, good explanation of license agreement prior to intake. Good introduction and show around on arrival. Weekly house meetings
- I'm not trained in PIE
- Because it's a refuge.
- Person centered, holistic support, tailored to suit the individual.
- Our staff have become more empathetic towards clients. We use a preventative approach vs a reactive approach. We welcome open discussion and give the clients opportunity to express their views.
- Our service is person centered and not just housing support. We understand how past experiences can impact on a person's future so by identifying past experiences and helping to get help/advice...our residents feel more able to succeed in the future.
- Understanding where the person has come from, having that conversation and listening to them. Working with them to access support. We have all received ACE aware training so have that understanding.
- One individual advised that they were 'unsure'.
- Five individuals did not comment on this question.

What PIE approaches does your project excel at?

- Considerate of past traumatic events which may have occurred, honest, open and empathetic
- All staff have undergone PIE and Trauma Informed care training to embed the approach into the organization.
- Staff at the service are trained and are aware of the personal history, trauma and experiences of their clients, and work to ensure their interactions are sensitive and responsive to those experiences.
- Person centered approach
- Our ethos always has and always will be person centered. We tailor our support plans around the individual and are aware that their ACE's may have had an impact on their life and experiences. By working with them on these issues we aim to rehabilitate them back into the community and work closely with them during their time with us.
- Realizing a client will have more going on 'behind the scenes' than they may initially divulge, the importance of working with them as an individual in the way that they want, respecting their choices and providing support whilst referring on for more specialist help with some needs.
- We have been changing paperwork in line with PIE principles. We have been training all staff to work in a more PIE / TIC way with clients and colleagues - the language that we use and the way we approach barriers and potential issues.
- Giving clients freedom to choose time, day and location of appointment.
- Providing person centered support to meet the needs of clients at their own pace, in a way which works for them. Working to the client's needs wants and wishes allows for engagement, the establishment of trust therefore better outcomes for the client.
- As above, all staff are trained to deliver therapeutic support. We offer a holistic service which we tailored to the individual's needs, we offer group programs, CYP and child/parent programs which take a whole family approach.
- Tailoring the support delivery and content to needs of individual. Quickly identifying when a client has high support needs and may need a lot of assistance to achieve small goals. Noticing when very small steps are achieved, the significance for that particular client. Being able to tell when a client is able to deal with things themselves and working out the level of support needed. Non -judgmental and not afraid to challenge other agencies who on odd occasions show a more judgmental approach to get deserved outcomes for clients.
- As above, we adapt the level of service to the needs of the end user, and have a range of ways in which the user can contact us for support, such as webchat, emails, telephone etc. We are able to switch channel easily. Good links with a range of local providers. Workforce have regular Support & Supervision meetings and supervisor is always available to answer queries or provide support.
- Informal support based on what the tenant needs as opposed to structured support
- Taking a more caring approach helps with trust issues in relation to all aspects of our work
- See above, as a housing association I feel that staff have a more caring attitude towards residents in their time of trauma/chaos/vulnerability, and feel that this comes across on many levels.
- Given them that 1 to 1 engagement
- Person centered approach, reflective practice, physical environment
- Building on trust and therapeutic relationships
- Person centered approach. The project takes a holistic approach and listens to the individual and then together supports the needs of the family. Boundaries are suggested to encourage the individual to succeed in their journey at the project and then to continue to implement when they have achieved move on. These show the individual and the family that the project cares and is not just here to put a roof over their head at their times of need however to work through all types of issues housing being one of the many individuals experience. The project goes above and beyond anyone's expectations and this is proved by employees supporting families will help when not working will collect items on their travels for residents with permission from the

manager. The project excels in support however this is not always appreciated by residents as they are not aware staff work out of their work hours and try and access funding donation in their own time. Words cannot express the dedication of the team and the way the project is run by the manager highly enough.

- Building relationships.
- Being person centered No evictions - unless for serious violence
- Giving choices and empowering the service user's
- Looking outside the box with the tenants to empower them, very few incidents at our complex needs project
- Tailored support sessions to client's needs, flexibility in support.
- My project provides an enormous amount of training so that we can fully support tenants with complex needs. Staff are actively encouraged to meet to debrief and discuss tenant's needs and reflect on work undertaken with each tenant. This means that support offered is not only PIE and person centered but also holistic in that the whole team know exactly what is going on with each tenant and can support tenants even if they are not key working with them
- We encourage opportunities and to access those opportunities we encourage routines, self-care, fulfillment, positive mental attitude and physical wellbeing. Open discussion with our residents and feedback.
- Support of helpline out of hours. House Meetings. Open door Office
- Support sessions
- Person centered, holistic support. 24 hour staff
- We use a preventative approach vs a reactive approach. Rather than implement warnings for breaches we work with our clients to address the reason for the breach rather than give an immediate warning/NTQ
- As we are person centered, our resident will help to plan the support they need. It can involve all aspects of life, not just housing. Our residents will complete the resettlement passport along with completing the AIMS booklet. We help to build confidence and the resilience needed. I have worked here for 10 years and during this time I can see that working in a PIE has considerably changed how the project delivers its service and that positive outcomes have resulted. It is very rare to see a resident re-present after leaving. Also having the move on process has helped to achieve this.
- Having a conversation, listening to what is not being said. Being there for the person and not just using a tick box exercise to provide support.
- One individual advised that they 'did not know'.
- Eight individuals did not comment on this question.

Do you feel your comments / feedback are consulted on by your LA?

- Sixteen declared 'yes'.
- Four declared 'no'.
- Seventeen declared 'sometimes'.
- Four individuals did not comment on this question.

RR Model. What barriers do you think your LA will face to rapidly rehouse successfully?

- Not considering the needs of the individuals
- Suitable and required number of accommodations needed Recruitment
- Houses - I think teams don't have the move on properties to start the process of supporting citizens to build a life. This is a key element to rapid rehousing - maybe we need to understand the scope of building plans for 1 bed accommodation.
- More social properties, to make private sector easier for clients to move on and not solely rely on social housing. More supported accommodation for clients with high support needs.

- The lack of accommodation.
- Lack of suitable accommodation. Suitably trained staff. Local member support could be an issue, as could neighbors and potentially LA housing staff who may oppose the approach. Low support worker salaries put staff off applying/joining the profession.
- Housing stock Recruitment into the roles Potentially, practical support from other agencies
- Clients will have the universal credit cut next month, which means they will have lower income and therefore may struggle to pay service charge. This could mean clients won't be put forward for rapid rehousing.
- Due to the nature of the service, rapid re housing may not be the best solution for all clients due to additional support and needs being present. Often clients presenting to domestic abuse services have additional needs to the impact dv/sv and offering rapid re housing may mask any support needs.
- Availability of Housing Stock.
- Lack of housing stock. Lack of affordable quality private rentals.
- Not enough properties
- Having smaller 1 person accommodation to do this. wraparound services all being on board
- Again lack of housing could be an issue
- As said before I feel there is a lack of good move on accommodation
- Again not enough move on accommodation for the under 25s
- Lack of affordable, accessible housing
- Suitable properties - For both specific medical needs and enough 1 bed properties.
- How long it takes to get a property back from voids and the condition of the property when they do come back. I have been in Clwyd Alyn property and they were ready to move in. I have been in FCC and they were terrible I was embarrassed to be there encouraging my client to take the property.
- Successfully, matching needs to housing availability
- Funding is the big issue and having the appropriate staff to renovate and maintain the housing in the community. Lack of properties is another issue that is a barrier when trying to move on families to the appropriate areas and size of the property.
- Lack of housing options
- Accommodation will be the main one
- Lack of move on accommodation
- Finances, lack of property to move people on to, so tenants in supported living accommodation become institutionalized and bed block. Also, tenants on benefits will often have to pay a lot of their own HB which can lead to financial difficulties, especially if work is provided by an agency as the work can cease any time. This then leads to HB issues and other restrictions to moving into their own property.
- Lack of housing options/becoming overwhelmed by amount of service users. Staffing/supply issues to have properties habitable in a realistic timescale.
- Covid fallout
- Lack of resources such as accommodation. There is a huge demand for housing in Flintshire as it is seen as a good investment for those that can afford to buy privately, therefore increasing house prices and then rents following Buy to Let purchases.
- Availability of suitable properties to meet service user needs
- Sufficient supply of adequate housing
- Lack of accommodation
- Finance, availability and increased demand
- Clients are reluctant to work with private landlords for fear of the landlord selling the property and evicting them. Lack of housing availability.
- I think that the lack of housing stock, lack of supported accommodations/ night stops
- One individual 'did not know'.
- Six individuals did not comment on this question.

Where do you see your service or organization offering value to a RR approach?

- Filling the gaps - mentoring individuals
- Assisting with support
- The set of principles that housing first work to lend themselves well to being able to gain trust and engage hard to reach citizens. Providing intensive support provision allows staff to enable citizens to achieve things together and sustain it.
- Emergency accommodation for domestic abuse.
- We potentially could offer a middle/low level support to ensure maintenance of tenancies.
- Long record of providing housing and support services successfully in N Wales. Already have experience of delivering Housing First approach. Network of agencies working in partnership to deliver this and our HSG services. Nationwide presence of housing, debt, support and other services.
- We could potentially offer support to those accessing Rapid Rehousing
- We would be able to support the rapid rehousing approach as we can help move the clients in quickly, apply for furniture for them through funding such as DAF. We will be able to help set up utility bills to alleviate the stress of this on clients when they are offered their (first) property.
- This would work with clients who present with no additional support needs, other than requiring safe secure accommodation, free from harm
- Quality generic housing support from a very experienced long serving team.
- We offer advice with debt, budgeting, grants for household goods, target hardening and move on outreach support to victims of DA. These factors are crucial to supporting individuals who have been disempowered in a relationship to build confidence and self-efficacy. Approximately 12% of our clients would report as homeless as they are often fleeing an abusive home and could be staying with friends or relatives, sofa surfing or living in temporary accommodation.
- A starting point for families who need support to ensure the package they require moving forward is in place
- By introducing more move on accommodations in the area with support if needed
- By introducing good quality move on accommodation, with support if required, sometimes in close proximity to the original accommodation.
- Increasing move on accommodation
- Complementary value - nacro's Flintshire Doorstop is not technically rapid rehousing, but the service is very successful and has very good results for people achieving their support goals and moving on to live independently.
- Being able to support tenants moving into properties with setting up their tenancy, bills. Applying for white goods etc. To be able to continue long term support with them to help them live independently in their own homes.
- The service offered by the staff is excellent unfortunately we can be waiting weeks for the property to be ready which holds everything up.
- Identifying needs and building skills for enduring successful tenancy
- The project guides residents and works through scenarios to hopefully make sure the families do not return having been given the opportunity to be offered a tenancy within Flintshire. The project works around the housing referral they have been provided with and addresses the issues highlighted in hope that this does not occur. The project offers and searches for solutions for any of the needs of the families highlighted in their support sessions and act as an advocate on their behalf if requested guiding them and demonstrating how to address other agencies in appropriate ways to get the outcome they want.
- Staff are trained in assessment of needs and implementation of individual support packages
- This will ensure we have a more rapid turnaround of service users which will help reduce homelessness

- By employing staff that are well experienced to help move tenants sustain their accommodation and work with them on their ISP's and support plans so that they have a better chance of maintaining their tenancy.
- We are able to offer temporary accommodation to those at immediate risk of homelessness.
- The support offered to some tenants is unquantifiable as some tenants need almost constant support meaning that they require staff attention for anything up to 8 hours per day.
- By transforming run down properties in the least favorable areas. With investment in property these areas become more desirable and a community spirit develops.
- To residents that are ready for independent living but remain in supported living
- Faster move on where appropriate, fast turnaround of voids.
- Our service supports families who have struggled to maintain an independent tenancy. I feel our service is there to support the, local authority before a RR approach is able to be implemented and back up the local authority where the RR approach has broken down for a client.
- Due to the support the project offers and the criteria that has to meet to be put on move on....I feel that this helps with the strain on services in the community in the long run as support is put in place and concerns highlighted before move on making for a more successful outcome
- Two individuals advised that they 'did not know' or were 'unsure'.
- Eight individuals did not comment on this question.

How achievable do you think the Rapid Rehousing model will be?

- Depends on funding allocated to allow support staff to engage and work with people. We need to think outside the box and create an approach that works for the citizen and not just for the processes that LA's have.
- Unsure at this stage as not aware of any new accommodation being built or created and currently there is a massive shortage.
- Depends upon it being driven by the right staff internally, and having the right external organizations involved and committed from the start. Accommodation requirements need to be shared and committed to by housing providers. There needs to be awareness raising of the model across interested parties prior to the launch. LA's need to learn from existing Housing First projects.
- If accommodation could be identified, then it is achievable
- Unsure as not aware of budgets etc.
- If properties are available it is achievable
- Will depend on accommodation
- Anything is achievable if you put the work in
- With more properties this would be achievable
- I can't see why it couldn't happen
- Depends on availability of housing
- Difficult to answer without seeing the model and how it will work.
- If the properties are turned around quicker than it would be achievable and it would stop clients telling me they have seen a council property empty for months and why can't they have that !
- Only if there is availability and suitable stock
- I believe it is achievable if the funding and the correct people are in charged however I believe that liaising between projects and the council and organizations is vital to support the residents.
- If we are able to utilize empty spaces, build more housing and develop better relations with private landlords then it could be achieved
- Not sure hopefully this will be achievable as Flintshire is widespread
- A lot depends on the tenants we are sent to support and turn their lives around. The more complex referrals we receive, the longer and harder it takes to get them to engage with us and support with their ISP's.
- Fairly achievable.

- Very achievable with the right funding and certainly would be a benefit to the communities.
- I think it will be challenging for all services, our service users personal challenges and experiences impact on their individual readiness to move on
- Very difficult.
- I feel it is a positive approach and an achievable one. Our service personnel have the correct skill set to support people / families in the home to help them maintain the tenancy, once RR is implemented.
- I feel that the model will be achievable but not necessarily in the time scale it has placed on its self.
- Five declared that they 'did not know' or were 'unsure'.
- Twelve individuals did not comment on this question.

What are you hoping to see in your authorities RR Plan?

- The needs of the individual
- Achieving a good rapid rehousing model as quickly as possible
- Numbers around property allocations per year for single person accommodation broken down by LA, RSL and PRS. Staff training on working in a PIE way, what rapid rehousing is and what the expected outcomes are.
- Move on from supported accommodation within a good timespan, so we can accommodate more clients fleeing DA. More face to face housing appointments with clients, so they get to know their housing officer and be able to build a good relationship.
- Short term move on accommodation.
- Realistic goals and expectations. A commitment to provision of suitable housing units from providers. A commitment from support providers to be able to commit as required. Education around rapid rehousing model shared as required. Understanding of the complex needs of clients and their choices.
- No time limits to the support an individual may require to enable them to succeed. Identifying suitable accommodation.
- I would hope that the council can start to have meetings with partner agencies such as us (housing support charity) that usually know and understand the clients better than the council, and ask for our opinion on who should be put forward for rapid rehousing. Local authorities tend to go off what is written down on paper e.g. who's paid their service charge, and don't understand the complexity of what is really going on with the clients.
- Allowances for domestic abuse victims
- Quality housing with support (where needed). Cut out need for temporary accommodation involving B&B and unsuitable options.
- A joined up approach so that a clients on going needs can be addressed. Funding so they can be supported to deal with the impact of DA, learn to live safely and improve their wellbeing, help with budgeting, parenting skills, target hardening etc.
- Partnership working and commitment from statutory and voluntary services, planned and in place ready to go
- More move on accommodation
- As above, more properties.
- More move on properties for all age groups
- Properties!
- Designated support workers for the model and access to funds/grants to help re-house service users quickly. Quick start up packs to help service users who don't have any essential items.
- Increase in turnaround time and quality and condition of council properties.
- A coherent and achievable plan
- To see appropriate accommodation available for all however it needs groundwork done by projects to enable families to be able to keep their home in an appropriate condition and bills are

prioritized and this is where liaising between rapid rehousing and project such as ourselves should work more closely and have boundaries to work to making sure families do not represent in months or a couple of years to start the process over again.

- More housing options and less homelessness
- Affordable housing in suitable area's for our service users
- More support from professional outside agencies and liaising with staff better, more on properties with floating support
- Focus on quicker turnaround for properties to be moved into quickly and efficiently.
- More one bedroom affordable properties. More properties aimed at young single people.
- More move on accommodation availability -in suitable locations (bus services, local shopping, Dr's etc.)
- If it's called rapid then it needs to be rapid.
- Faster move on, increased availability of materials.
- I would like to see more suitable accommodations available to deliver the service that the authority is capable of delivering.
- Twelve individuals did not comment on this question.

Any other comments?

- We need a collective approach to working in homelessness across all teams that staff are aware of. Value based recruitment needs to be a key focus when recruiting staff. Use of the housing act - some staff use it in the spirit in which it is meant but there are some that used to keep people from accessing TA during the pandemic and thus shows the lack of need for services due to low numbers .
- To work together more with housing departments. We can quite often become in an "us and them" scenario with housing staff. It's frustrating as we are all trying to achieve the same outcome. We are funded by SP to achieve positive outcomes for people, the we are faced with barriers from housing or inappropriate accommodation offers i.e.: a person with significant MH issues and very vulnerable being told they need to look at shared accommodation - We know this could have a detrimental effect on their future but our view isn't always taken into account. By working together we can achieve better outcomes for people, then free up crisis accommodation for people presenting to homeless departments, creating an effective system.
- LA's working regionally could continue to support rapid rehousing, as is happening with Housing First in some LA's. There still needs to be a commitment to supported housing/floating support to prevent homelessness and other issues. There needs to be specific support for homeless prisoners/those with housing support needs.
- Consider that many people e.g. prison leavers suffer with mental health and have substance misuse issues. Being put into accommodation with 12 other similar persons, will clearly have a negative influence. More one bed temporary accommodation properties need to be offered to those with severe complex needs so that they are not set up to fail.
- Long term funding is essential to deliver high quality services, and recruit and retain skilled staff to provide lifesaving support.
- I think a range of approaches is important. Rapid rehousing, including HF is incredibly valuable (if enough properties!), however there is no one approach that fits everyone, and so we should be careful not to get rid of all other approaches in order to only provide rapid rehousing schemes. We must be mindful of competition (for staff, for properties etc.) amongst the different approaches and ensure that projects work together / communicate effectively. Also important to put time into systems change - i.e. to build partnerships and infrastructure to allow services such as mental health, adult social care and mainstream health care to work together effectively.
- Decorating grants are a fantastic idea that can help residents invest in their home. However, badly decorated or unfinished homes will rapidly become worse and not maintained. Many residents do not have the skills required or overestimate their skills and as such I believe the accommodation should be completed basic but sound-with no outstanding maintenance. There

must be a more environmentally sound and cost effective manner to avoid 'skipping' carpets and white goods?

- As a business, I think companies would benefit from having the authority to have tenants personal self-rent taken from source to avoid arrears, which restricts move on to our land lords as they are reluctant to have any tenants with arrears or ASB issues etc.
- Thirty three individual did not comment on this question.



COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 9 th February 2022
Report Subject	Temporary Accommodation Homelessness Audit 2021 Findings Report
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report confirms the outcome of a recent Audit of the management of temporary accommodation within Flintshire. The audit has highlighted a number of areas for improvement and is categorised as a Red Audit Report.

The Audit Report is due to be presented to Governance & Audit Committee on the 14th March 2022 and it is necessary for Informal Cabinet and the Community Housing & Assets Scrutiny Committee to be aware of this in advance. The Report provides background to the request for the audit, the audit key findings and the process of service improvement required to address the risks identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Community Housing & Assets Scrutiny Committee note the report and provide their comments and observations ahead of the report being presented to Governance and Audit Committee on the 14 th March 2022.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION HOMELESSNESS AUDIT 2021 FINDINGS REPORT
1.01	Background to Temporary Accommodation Temporary Accommodation is “interim housing” provided to people who are homeless (singles/couples/families) and are owed duties under the

	<p>Housing Wales Act (2014) by Flintshire County Council. The service is delivered through the Homeless Team within the Housing & Prevention Service and has a small core team of a Temporary Accommodation Officer and a Support Worker. The Team is supervised by the Homeless Prevention Team Leader.</p> <p>The current portfolio of properties is a mixture of houses of multiple occupation (HMO), self-contained flats and houses which are leased from private landlords, along with a small number Council HRA properties.</p> <p>These properties are secured through a Lease or Management Agreement and then licenses for occupation are issued to those people who reside in the properties. Properties are dispersed across the county and often located within or close to larger towns in Flintshire to enable access to local public services and community infrastructure for homeless households.</p> <p>The demand for Temporary Accommodation and Emergency Accommodation has grown significantly on the back of the covid pandemic with Welsh Government requiring all homeless people to be accommodated through the “everyone in” directive. Pre-covid the portfolio had a high number of vacancies with properties empty, but since covid and the additional duties to house more people, extra properties via HRA have been secured to meet the increased demand. The service also relies on hotel and B&B accommodation, as is the case across all parts of Wales in the current climate.</p> <p>Demand is likely to continue to grow as we exit the pandemic and enter recovery. There are also legislative changes and a move to “Rapid Rehousing” within the homeless sector which will, in the short to medium term, continue to place significant demands on the homeless service requiring effective temporary housing solutions with appropriate management controls and infrastructure.</p>
1.02	<p>Requesting the Audit</p> <p>A number of areas for improvement and operational challenges associated with the management of the Temporary Accommodation portfolio (limited portfolio – increased demand for homeless accommodation – lack of policy, performance and IT infrastructure) were identified by the Service Manager who requested an audit of the Temporary Accommodation function to test the service before focussing on service growth plans.</p> <p>Opportunities for detailed analysis and assessment of service performance and function has not been as easy as hoped during the pandemic on the back of significant increases in demand for homeless services and specifically temporary accommodation, due to staff and management capacity whilst working within the response phase of the pandemic and under sustained work pressures.</p> <p>The Service Manager is also exploring opportunity to engage in the roll out of the Welsh Government Private Sector Leasing Scheme where private landlords and property owners are encouraged to lease their properties to local authorities in return for a rent guarantee and additional funding to</p>

	<p>improve the condition of their property. These homes are then allocated to residents on a long term basis, helping them to exit homelessness.</p> <p>The audit presented an invaluable opportunity for an independent assessment of service and an opportunity to identify areas of focus for service improvement. It is key that any growth or future service development opportunities for a larger and more diverse portfolio of leased properties are built upon solid foundations.</p>
1.03	<p>The Audit Findings</p> <p>The Audit Report is attached along with Management response and this needs to be reviewed by Scrutiny Committee on the 9th February 2022 before going to Governance & Audit Committee on the 14th March 2022.</p> <p>Summary of key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service embraced the change in legislation in response to the COVID 19 pandemic to ensure no individual was homeless and sleeping on the street. • A Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Policy is not in place to provide guidance on how the service objectives stipulated in the North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy will be achieved. • Temporary Accommodation processes and contract agreements - A process is not in place to provide guidance on how to deal with refused offers for permanent accommodation, to oversee rent income, arrears and write off, or to monitor contract agreements • Management Information is limited and does not demonstrate effective monitoring of service delivery performance. • The Open Housing System is not being utilised to manage stock, tenancies, repair work or rental income to be able to effectively deliver on service objectives. • Lack of evidence of management information being used to inform decision making and service planning. • Quality of data underpinning risk indicators may not be reliable. • Decision making controls are not documented or evidenced as operating consistently.
1.04	<p>Responding to the Audit Findings</p> <p>A detailed Service Improvement Plan to compliment the Audit Response and pick up on all the actions required to deliver on the Audit recommendations will see a stronger focus placed on the core principles of housing management that are needed to turn the service round and offer assurance that it is run effectively.</p> <p>Processes to underpin the effective management of a temporary accommodation portfolio will be developed and systems and infrastructure will be put in place to enable the service to better monitor performance, manage risk, improve service delivery and enable planned growth and service expansion.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The following issues have been considered as part of the audit response and service improvement planning process and have a clear resource implication:</p> <p>Human Resources Dedicated Service Improvement (Project Management) – with current staffing capacity issues there will be a need to dedicate officer time to delivering some of the change in relation to policy, procedures and process. Funding for Project Management has been identified to bring in additional capacity through Grant Funding linked to housing support and homelessness services.</p> <p>Capital IT Infrastructure – The Open Housing System is the Councils core housing management IT System and has a specific Private Sector Module that the Council already has access to but has yet to enable. Officer time from IT Services and IT consultancy will be required to enable, test and implement this system functionality</p> <p>Revenue Existing Budgets - A more efficient temporary accommodation portfolio will collect more rent, have shorter void periods, operate cost effective repairs and maintenance activities, offering efficiencies in revenue expenditure for the service.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>Risk: The audit has clearly identified a number of risks associated with the current ways of working and operating practices</p> <p>Mitigation: Successful delivery of the service improvement plan will address significant areas of risk and strengthen service delivery providing opportunity for the temporary accommodation portfolio to grow in response to growing demand.</p> <p>Risk: Poor management practices and controls measures relating to the temporary accommodation portfolio will mean opportunities such as joining the Welsh Government Private Sector Leasing Scheme will be too high risk and potentially missed.</p> <p>Mitigation: Successful delivery of the service improvement plan will address significant areas of risk and strengthen service delivery providing opportunity for Flintshire to have confidence to engage in the roll out of the Welsh Government Private Sector Leasing Scheme.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	None

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Temporary Accommodation (Homelessness) Audit Findings Report December 2021
5.02	Appendix 2 – Temporary Accommodation Service Improvement Plan including Audit response

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Evaluation of the Welsh Government Private Sector Leasing Scheme https://gov.wales/evaluation-private-rented-sector-leasing-scheme-pilot-summary-html

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Martin Cooil – Housing & Prevention Service Manager Telephone: 07880 423234 E-mail: martin.cooil@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Housing Wales Act (2014) Legislation that underpins the homelessness system within Wales including peoples statutory rights and Local Authorities duties and responsibilities.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Rapid rehousing is an approach for people whose first and most important need is to access housing; with a lack of it often the main reason why they are homeless. Rapid rehousing helps people settle quickly back with family or friends, into private rented, social housing or other affordable and safe long-term housing options.</p>

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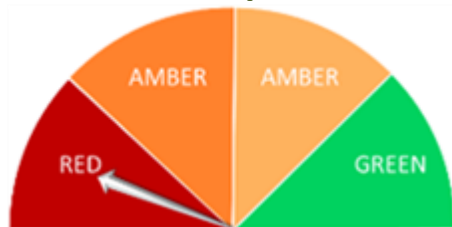
Flintshire Internal Audit

Audit Report

Title: 21/22 Homelessness & Temporary Accommodation
Portfolio: Housing & Assets
Issued Dated: December 2021
Report No: 26-2021/22
Report Status: Final Report

Internal Audit engagements are conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Audit Opinion



1 Executive Summary:

Introduction and Scope:

The Temporary Accommodation audit was carried out as part of the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2021/22 which was agreed with Chief Officers and approved by the Council’s Governance and Audit Committee.

Temporary Accommodation is a key mitigation should levels of homelessness increase and enables the authority to meet its statutory duties to accommodate eligible homeless households. This is underpinned by the North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy 18/22, which complies with Section 50 of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, for achieving the following objectives in the local housing authority’s area:

- The prevention of homelessness;
- That suitable accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless;
- That satisfactory support is available for people who are or may become homeless.

The Housing & Prevention Service Manager came into post in March 2020. He requested this audit as this has been identified as an area of risk for current service delivery in light of the increase demands placed on the service during Covid and future direction of travel in relation to the Rapid Rehousing Agenda. The review focused on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in place to manage the defined potential risks:

- Temporary accommodation resources are not adequate to deal with increased levels of homelessness.
- Processes are not in place or insufficient to ensure the temporary accommodation portfolio is managed effectively and its operational practices are not robust enough to meet increased demand and potential growth of portfolio capacity.
- Management information is not available to oversee control effectiveness of temporary accommodation rent collection, void

Audit Opinion:

In each report we provide management with an overall assurance opinion on how effectively risks are being managed within the area reviewed. Appendix A of the report details our assurance levels:

Assurance:	Explanation
Red- Limited	<p>Limited Assurance – Urgent process revision required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key controls are absent or rarely applied • Evidence of (or the potential for) significant financial impact • Key management information does not exist • System/process objectives are not being met, or are being met at a significant and unnecessary cost or use of resources <p>Conclusion: a lack of adequate or effective controls.</p>

The table below highlights the number and priority of agreed actions to be implemented.

Priority	High (Red)	Medium (Amber)	Low (Green)	Total
No.	3	3	1	7

and lease management.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, a number of government initiatives were introduced which assisted with the mitigation of homelessness levels. The pandemic impacted significantly on this frontline service and management was successful in achieving the nationwide ambition to provide shelter to all those who were identified as being homeless. It is important to note this service area has had significant turnover in the last 18 months with 50% of the staff in the housing solutions team being new whilst dealing with significant increases in caseloads due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

As these national mitigations come to an end and with already high numbers of homeless households accommodated as part of the national public health response which extended additional accommodation duties to a large number of people; there is a strong likelihood of increased pressure on temporary and emergency housing.

The 18/22 strategy will need to be reviewed in line with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Planning Briefing Paper which has been recently published by Welsh Government to provide guidance to councils on the requirements to increase the availability of both social and private rented housing for the homeless and reduce the timescales to bring empty properties back into use by June 2022. A New Housing Support Programme Strategy which incorporates the Homeless Strategy is also requiring adoption by Flintshire County Council by 31st March 2022.

In order to achieve this, systems, processes, and controls need to be considered so they can operate effectively and proactively monitor performance whilst identifying emerging trends or new areas of focus. This will ensure the operation is less reactive.

The review has identified that significant improvements are required. These relate to the overall control framework including the lack of a Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Policy, undocumented inadequate operational processes and lack of evidence of reliable

management information. Finally due to the lack of documented procedures or evidence of accurate data being used to support decision making we are unable to provide assurance that risks are being mitigated.

It should be noted that the Service Manager was clear from the start that he anticipated weaknesses would be identified through this review and has advised that the findings are in line with his own assessment on taking post. The Service manager considers this offers additional confidence in regards to the opportunities for positive response from the service post audit.

Testing has identified the controls to be insufficient as reflected above, and a red (Limited) assurance rating has been reported.

2 Summary Findings:

Areas Managed Well	Areas for Further Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The service embraced the change in legislation in response to the COVID 19 pandemic to ensure no individual was homeless and sleeping on the street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Policy is not in place to provide guidance on how the service objectives stipulated in the North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy will be achieved.Temporary Accommodation processes and contract agreements - A process is not in place to provide guidance on how to deal with refused offers for permanent accommodation, to oversee rent income, arrears and write off, or to monitor contract agreements.Management Information is limited and does not demonstrate effective monitoring of service delivery performance.The Open Housing System is not being utilised to manage stock, tenancies, repair work or rental income to be able to effectively deliver on service objectives.Lack of evidence of management information being used to inform decision making and service planning.Quality of data underpinning risk indicators may not be reliable.Decision making controls are not documented or evidenced as operating consistently.

3 Action Plan:

Priority	Description
High (Red)	Action is imperative to ensure that the objectives of the area under review are met.
Medium (Amber)	Requires action to avoid exposure to significant risks in achieving the objectives of the area.
Low (Green)	Action encouraged to enhance control or improve operational efficiency.

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
1 (R)	<p><u>Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Policy</u></p> <p>The North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 was developed to inform commissioning plans and funding priorities for each of the six local authority areas. The aim of this strategy was to address the root causes of homelessness, with the aim of eradicating homelessness in North Wales. A copy of the strategy is available on the Council's website.</p> <p>The Strategy identified a number of areas which required focus which included 'individuals in temporary accommodation being unable to move on, a shortage of the right type of accommodation, costs associated with temporary accommodation being too expensive, and the requirement for continual risk assessments'.</p> <p>It is important that a strategy is underpinned by policy, procedure and performance indicators to ensure its aims are being met.</p> <p>A Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Policy is not in place to provide guidance on how the service objectives stipulated in the North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy will be achieved across 18/22. This is relevant as in the absence of the pandemic, the Council would still be seeking to achieve its Homelessness Strategy 18/22 to comply with its</p>	<p>The response will be delivered in 2 stages – medium and longer term. All actions are assigned to the Service manager to be delegated across team.</p> <p><u>Medium term (June 2022)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restructure of Housing Support and Homeless Prevention Service and create a specific team for Property Management to take the management of Temporary Accommodation out of the Homeless Team. Restructure has been approved, job descriptions are being devised and recruitment to begin in April 2022. <p><u>Long Term (Dec 2022)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness Accommodation Policy to be devised which will guide all processes and ensure delivery of all ambitions identified in the soon to be revised Housing Support Programme Strategy which comes in force 1st April 2022. <p>URN 03234</p>	Service Manager	<p>End of June 22</p> <p>End of Dec 22</p>

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>statutory duties (Section 50 of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014).</p> <p>We appreciate that the aims of the strategy will have significantly impacted by Covid 19, however there is no existing policy which management can refer to in order to determine if pre-existing strategic aims have been addressed and actually achieved.</p> <p>This poses a risk the Council's Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation operational processes are not adequate to ensure the temporary accommodation portfolio is managed effectively in line with the approved strategy.</p>			
2(R)	<p><u>Temporary Accommodation processes and contract agreements</u></p> <p>Documented procedures help ensure that the policy and strategy aims will be achieved by guiding officers day to day. In addition the team has to engage with external providers and internal service teams in order to be able to deliver to the client.</p> <p>Testing identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil documented procedures – means that training up new staff is reliant on a single person – easy to be inconsistent, complete the wrong process, etc. • Unable to assess if process is in line with strategic aim e.g. take place at the most effective point in the workflow, if roles and responsibilities are clear or if controls are documented. (also see URN 3255 management information) <p>Key gaps identified:</p>	<p>The response will be delivered in 3 stages – immediate, medium and longer term. All actions are assigned to the Service manager to be delegated across team.</p> <p><u>Short term (March 2022)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLAs to be introduced between all areas which have a direct impact in service delivery. Including Responsive repairs through FCC, Void Property Turnaround, Cleaning Contracts, Fire Safety Regime • A process to be defined to deal with refused offers of permanent accommodation. • A process to be defined to review lease agreements prior to their renewal/expiration date. • A process for take on of new properties into the Temporary Accommodation portfolio. 	Service Manager	<p>End of March 22 End of June 22 End of March 23</p>

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLA agreements are not in place which set and manage expectations between internal service areas who impact the delivery of the process, primarily the void/lease management process. • A process is not in place to provide guidance on how to deal with refused offers for permanent accommodation as these declines impact temporary accommodation stock availability. • A process to oversee rent income, arrears and write off process is not in place. • A process is not in place to identify contracts/agreements which are due to expire for those entities which are utilised for temporary accommodation. An A4 folder is kept in the office with all contracts; yet it is unclear who and how the contracts are being monitored. One of the contracts has been expired since 2009. <p>Failure to have adequate, established processes in place to guide the operation and the management of the temporary accommodation portfolio may lead to the service being unable to meet its objectives and legislative requirements should demand increase and growth of portfolio capacity be required.</p>	<p><u>Medium term (June 2022)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental Charge Policy to be define to oversee rent income, arrears and write off. • Review the performance information needed for management oversight when the Policy is in place. <p><u>Longer term (March 2023)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full end to end temporary accommodation process to be mapped to assign roles and responsibilities, identify process delays and inefficiencies as well as document controls. <p>URN 3237</p>		
3(R)	<p><u>Management Information</u></p> <p>Accurate and reliable management information is important to ensure the actual operations are delivering its service objectives and risks are being adequately managed.</p> <p>Testing identified management information and its use is limited. Data relating to the temp accommodation delivery is captured in a number of</p>	<p>The response will be delivered in the medium term. All actions are assigned to the Service manager to be delegated across team.</p> <p><u>Medium term (June 2022)</u></p> <p>Introduce management information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor performance timescales at the various stages in Void Management Process. 	Service Manager	End of June 22

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>systems/spreadsheets which impedes the ability to interrogate the data captured at short notice and without the need for manipulation. Quality of data issue raised in Finding 4, URN 3256.</p> <p>Key gaps identified: The use of management information to provide assurance that the process, policy and strategy are being delivered is not in place. This means that we were unable to test, and management is unable to demonstrate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to reconcile return to Welsh Government with data held in spreadsheets • Performance timescales at the various stages in the temporary accommodation allocation process in order to identify process impediments/ opportunities for improvement. • Monitor declined offers for permanent accommodations which are subsequently denied by the tenant- % offered and declined, reason for decline, etc. • How long individuals/families have been in their temporary accommodation. Although the date of tenant placement and leave date are captured on the temporary database, the data is not analysed. • Oversee rent arrears and collection efforts is not in place. Temp accommodation rent accounts have not been set up on the open housing system for privately owned properties. Finance reporting available reports on values received but does not track against what should have been received to identify areas of rent arrears. <p>Failure to have adequate, management information in place to oversee the management of the temporary</p>	<p>Information to be timely reviewed to identify and address process impediments/ opportunities for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide oversight of all offers for permanent accommodations, those that were declined and the reason for decline. • Oversee length of stays in interim accommodation which is being developed in In-Phase. • Oversee rent collection activities. • Monitor SLA agreement KPIs. <p>URN 3255</p>		

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>accommodation portfolio may lead to the service being unable to meet its objectives and legislative requirements should demand increase and growth of portfolio capacity be required.</p>			
<p>4 (A)</p>	<p><u>IT systems / software</u> Requests for temporary accommodation can come from a range of sources and actions need to be timely in order to ensure the client is matched with the right accommodation and their stay is managed in line with service objectives. Accuracy of this information helps make informed decisions.</p> <p>In the event there is no available stock or the current available stock is not adequate to meet the individual/family needs, hotels and B&Bs are utilised. This is particularly challenging for the Council as there are low numbers of these types of accommodations within Flintshire compared to other local authorities in North Wales. This may result in individuals/families being placed out of county to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>The service does not use the Open Housing system to manage stock, tenancies, repair work or rental income.</p> <p>The service holds a number of spreadsheets (Homelessness Prevention 'Database', the Temporary Accommodation 'Database' and the Bed and Breakfast 'Database') to capture information in relation to tenants and accommodations. It should be noted these are not databases with associated functionality but excel documents.</p> <p>Testing identified:</p>	<p>The response will be delivered in 3 stages – short, medium and longer term. All actions are assigned to the Service manager to be delegated across team.</p> <p><u>Short term (March 2022)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the short term, improve and enhance excel spreadsheet to capture all information in relation to temporary accommodation so data can be analysed and interrogated in order to identify efficiencies/opportunities for improvements as well as trends. <p><u>Medium term (June 2022)</u></p> <p>Open Housing System Private Sector leasing module is already purchased but not implemented. IT has advised will need to wait for V16 of Open housing and IT capacity means that they will not be able to pick up this project until June 2022 at the earliest. Ensure detailed scope of works and Project Plan adopted.</p> <p><u>Longer term (March 2023)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the new system and all appropriate functionality to manage the Temporary Accommodation Portfolio in regards to all aspects of housing management. 	<p>Service Manager</p>	<p>End of March 22 End of June 22 End of March 23</p>

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excel documents are not secure / supported and risk of loss of info is high. • The data held in these does not reconcile to the information submitted in the Welsh Government Returns for the period tested. • The data is inaccurate as some formulas are linked to the incorrect line within the spreadsheet. • It is not possible to obtain a single client view as the data captured in the various spreadsheets does not have a unique identifier. • Data relating to the temp accommodation delivery is captured in a number of systems / databases / spreadsheets which impedes the ability to interrogate the data captured at short notice and without the need for manipulation. <p>There is a risk that strategic decisions may be made based on inaccurate information captured in the various spreadsheets utilised.</p>	URN 3256		
5 (A)	<p><u>Evidence of management information to inform decision making and service planning</u></p> <p>Accurate reliable data gathering and analysis is key in proactively managing service risks, supporting operational decision making and informing longer term planning.</p> <p>Homelessness and Temporary accommodation levels are collected via the Homelessness Prevention 'Database', the Temporary Accommodation 'Database' and the Bed and Breakfast 'Database'. These are not databases, but spreadsheets devised by the service. Data is reported via the Presentations Comparison Spreadsheet and the Welsh Government monthly</p>	<p>Agree in part.</p> <p>A weekly review of temporary accommodation capacity and those individuals'/families likely to move on (leaving temporary accommodation) takes place. Capacity is increased if required; emergency accommodation can be achieved through booking bed and breakfasts through block booking arrangements.</p> <p>Additional pressures have been observed due to Covid, housing market pressures and the need to increase capacity immediately. Welsh Government Covid Hardship Grant has enabled this as part of the emergency homeless and public</p>	Service Manager	End March 2022

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>returns. We have not been able to reconcile the data held back to the original data source (as raised in finding 3, URN3255) Testing identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is sometimes a need to use B&B/temporary accommodation in instances where individuals have been previously excluded from certain temporary accommodation settings or certain geographical areas; however these risk factors / issues which limit the choice of suitable accommodation are not effectively captured via the current temporary accommodation spreadsheets to assist decision making. • Data shows that only 50% (30 individual/families) which have been placed in temporary accommodation this financial year have since moved out. It is accepted the usual routes to move clients into permanent accommodation were restricted during the pandemic. However testing identified management information is currently not produced for all those offers for permanent accommodation which are declined or for individuals who have been in temporary accommodation for periods longer than expected. The lack of this management information will hamper compliance with the Rapid rehousing approach specifically, making sure individuals/families reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long. • At the time of testing we were not provided with any 	<p>health response.</p> <p>It is not possible to accurately forecast homelessness numbers. Trend analysis prior to Covid19 is not applicable and would deliver limited value due to the significant change the pandemic has had on the landscape.</p> <p>Achievement of deliverables in line with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is the ultimate aim.</p> <p><u>Short term (March 2022)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of reasons for refusal of permanent accommodation and action process to manage “unreasonable refusals” to be documented. <p>URN 03236</p>		

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When																
	<p>evidence of key indicators being reported / used when discussing or making decisions in relation to immediate / longer term service needs.</p> <p>The lack of reconciled management information being available and being demonstrated as being used in decision making and planning makes it difficult to provide assurance that operational and strategic decision making is based on reliable data.</p> <p>This may put the council at risk of not achieving its strategic objectives in line with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Planning and lead to a potential increase in the requirement and costs for temporary accommodation.</p>																			
6 (A)	<p><u>Risk management</u></p> <p>A risk has been raised in the Housing and Assets risk register (HA09) which relates to the management of risk to 'ensure sufficient capacity and resilience within the service resources (staffing and budgets) to meet growing need for homeless prevention services and interim accommodation'.</p> <p>A review of the most recent risk register (April 2021) and associated method statement (last updated June 2020) showed the following</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="264 1106 992 1337"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Risk Rating</th> <th>Likelihood</th> <th>Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RAW/ Inherent</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Not included in risk register</td> <td>Not included in risk register</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current (April 2021)</td> <td>Amber</td> <td>Not included in risk register</td> <td>Not included in risk register</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Target</td> <td>Amber</td> <td>High</td> <td>Significant</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The most recent risk register indicates that all risks have been managed to target.</p>		Risk Rating	Likelihood	Impact	RAW/ Inherent	Red	Not included in risk register	Not included in risk register	Current (April 2021)	Amber	Not included in risk register	Not included in risk register	Target	Amber	High	Significant	<p>Disagree. Nil further action.</p> <p>Risk is defined and updated quarterly.</p> <p>Metrics for assurance are clear and accurate data is available and used to support risk assessment.</p> <p>Our key risk indicators include spending, number of cases per officer and capacity (in temporary accommodation provision). We are confident in the quality of these metrics and that they are monitored by Management Team and evidenced to demonstrate risk management.</p> <p>URN 03226</p>		
	Risk Rating	Likelihood	Impact																	
RAW/ Inherent	Red	Not included in risk register	Not included in risk register																	
Current (April 2021)	Amber	Not included in risk register	Not included in risk register																	
Target	Amber	High	Significant																	

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>The indicators in the risk method statements list the following metrics to support management’s assurance of the risk rating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of homeless cases managed under Housing Wales Act 2014 legislation • Outcomes for Homeless Prevention (WHO12 Welsh Government Returns) • Numbers in interim housing (Temp Accom and B&B) • Expenditure on interim housing (Temp Accom and B&B) • Expenditure of Homeless Prevention Funding • Expenditure of Discretionary Housing Payments • Award from Welsh Government Phase 2 Funding <p>Testing has identified a number of issues highlighted in previous findings relating to the reliability of the data quality and lack of management information produced. This makes it difficult to provide assurance that the risk has been scored accurately and is being managed in line with agree tolerance.</p> <p>Failure to accurately score risks impacting temporary accommodation service delivery may lead to increased/ unwarranted costs to the service as a result of not having sufficient staff as well as sufficient availability for the correct type of accommodation required leading to individuals/families being placed in B&Bs and in some cases out of the county.</p>			
7 (G)	<p><u>Document and evidence all decision making controls</u></p> <p>An effective control framework means that key controls will operate consistently when needed.</p> <p>The Housing Solutions Team Leader (HSTL) advised</p>	<p>The response to this Audit finding will be delivered in the short term. All actions are assigned to the Service manager to be delegated across team.</p> <p><u>Short term (March 2022)</u></p>	Service Manager	End March 22

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>that she implemented a control to review and sign off each temporary housing allocation to ensure allocation decisions were compliant with process. This control has not been documented in any procedure (see URN 3237).</p> <p>At the time of testing, Internal Audit were advised this control does not operate when the HSTL is unavailable due to sickness or annual leave. The original back up via the Homeless and Advice Manager cannot operate as the post is unfilled. However, the Service Manager has advised that he signs off all decision making for allocations in the absence of the HSTL.</p> <p>Difference between the information supplied to audit between the HSTL and the Service Manager may indicate this control may not be operating consistently.</p> <p>It should be noted that accuracy and reliability of the decision making was outside the scope of this audit and that due to a lack of documented procedures or evidence we were unable to review this any further. However, inconsistencies in the operation of a decision making control can pose a risk, potentially leading to increased costs to the service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All controls relating to the allocation process to be documented to facilitate a consistent approach and evidence decision making based on roles and responsibilities. <p>URN 03225</p>		

4 Distribution List:

Name	Title
Martin Cooil	Accountable Officer Responsible for the Implementation of Agreed Actions
Neal Cockerton	Chief Officer, Housing and Assets
Martin Cooil	Housing and Prevention Service Manager

Appendix A – Audit Opinion:

The audit opinion is the level of assurance that Internal Audit can give to management and all other stakeholders on the adequacy and effectiveness of controls within the area audited. It is assessed following the completion of the audit and is based on the findings from the audit. Progress on the implementation of agreed actions will be monitored. Findings from **Some** or **Limited** assurance audits will be reported to the Audit Committee.

Assurance	Explanation
Green - Substantial	<p>Strong controls in place (all or most of the following)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key controls exist and are applied consistently and effectively • Objectives achieved in a pragmatic and cost effective manner • Compliance with relevant regulations and procedures • Assets safeguarded • Information reliable <p>Conclusion: key controls have been adequately designed and are operating effectively to deliver the key objectives of the system, process, function or service.</p>
Amber Green – Reasonable	<p>Key Controls in place but some fine tuning required (one or more of the following)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key controls exist but there are weaknesses and / or inconsistencies in application though no evidence of any significant impact • Some refinement or addition of controls would enhance the control environment • Key objectives could be better achieved with some relatively minor adjustments <p>Conclusion: key controls generally operating effectively.</p>
Amber Red – Some	<p>Significant improvement in control environment required (one or more of the following)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key controls exist but fail to address all risks identified and / or are not applied consistently and effectively • Evidence of (or the potential for) financial / other loss • Key management information exists but is unreliable • System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at an unnecessary cost or use of resources. <p>Conclusion: key controls are generally inadequate or ineffective.</p>
Red – Limited	<p>Urgent system revision required (one or more of the following)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key controls are absent or rarely applied • Evidence of (or the potential for) significant financial / other losses • Key management information does not exist • System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at a significant and unnecessary cost or use of resources. <p>Conclusion: a lack of adequate or effective controls.</p>

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Temporary Accommodation Service Improvement Plan 2022/2023

Task	Lead	Deadline	Progress	Commentary
Identify financial resources and staff capacity needed to deliver on the Service Improvement work to respond to Temporary Accommodation Audit Findings	Service Manager	March 2022	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding identified for Service Improvement /Project Manager Funding for Restructure in HSG Delivery Plan Priority Tasks delegated to Team Leader for Action 2 days per week additional officer support for Service Improvement (HJ)
Review procedures for Out of Hours placements within Temporary and Emergency Accommodation	Service Manager	March 2022	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OOH Staff Group engaged to identify challenges relating to OOH service delivery Draft Procedures and Guidance Notes for Staff shared with group for feedback and fine tuning New procedures adopted and clearly documented for all staff and to be reviewed routinely through OOH Staff Group
Develop procedures for repairs and maintenance of Temporary Accommodation and ensure processes in place for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> property inspections repairs for service repairs for landlords health & safety compliance 	Service Manager	March 2022	---	Not Started 01/2022
Develop procedures relating to Void Management for Temporary Accommodation including Service Level Agreement as required with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCC Housing Assets Service Cleaning contracts 	Service Manager	March 2022	---	Not Started 01/2022

<p>Develop procedures relating to Responsive Repairs for Temporary Accommodation including Service Level Agreement as required with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCC Housing Assets Service • Cleaning contracts • Fire Safety Services • Leased Landlords 	Service Manager	March 2022	---	Not Started 01/2022
<p>Develop clear processes for Renewal and Review of Leases for the Temporary Accommodation</p>	Service Manager	March 2022	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting Feedback on existing Lease Agreement from Corp Asset Management • Expired Leases identified • Dialogue with Landlords underway for Lease Renewal • Lease Renewal Decision Record developed
<p>Review arrangements for "Take On" of FCC and Housing Partners properties for use as Temporary Accommodation through a Memorandum of Understanding or Management Agreement</p>	Service Manager	March 2022	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of Understanding / Management Agreement in Draft Format awaiting • Review with FCC Housing Management scheduled
<p>Develop Policy for Income Management relating to the Temporary Accommodation Portfolio to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent Collection • Service Charge Collection • Arrears management – current and former • Income Maximisation and Support • Arrears Write Off 	Service Manager	March 2022	---	Not Started 01/2022

Page 10 of 20

Improve and enhance excel spreadsheet to capture all information in relation to temporary accommodation.	Service Manager	March 2022	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapped out all datasets to review
Review reasons for refusal of permanent accommodation and develop process to manage “unreasonable refusals”	Service Manager	March 2022	---	Not Started 01/2022
Develop “Tenancy Start Up” Factsheets and Support for residents so they have a clear expectation of what help they will get when accessing Temporary Accommodation	Service Manager	June 2022	---	Not Started 01/2022
Develop processes in relation to “Accommodation Placements” a ensure a consistent approach and decision making based on roles and responsibilities	Service Manager	March 2022	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation Placement Decision Record created and being piloted with Homeless Team
Develop procedures relating to “Lease Take On” and promote this housing product to local landlords to increase supply of temporary accommodation	Service Manager	June 2022	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template for Lease Take On Decision Record Complete • Core Offer for Landlords clear – 90% LHA – minimal repairs liability – hassle free management etc • Discussions with interested landlords ongoing
Create a specific team for Property Management and Private Rented Sector engagement with responsibility for the sourcing and management of Temporary Accommodation and future Leased Services (PRS Leasing Scheme)	Service Manager	June 2022	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding secured through the Housing Support Grant • Restructure proposals approved in principle • Job Descriptions for similar roles elsewhere sourced

<p>Review and refresh Performance Management Framework for all of the following and ensure appropriate routine KPIs captured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Capacity • Income Management • Repairs • Voids • Routine Inspection • Tenancy Support • Length of Stay • Tenant Move On • Property Compliance H&S • Lease Arrangements 	Service Manager	June 2022	---	Not Started 01/2022
<p>Improve implementation plan for move to Open Housing System with IT Support Services</p>	Service Manager	June 2022	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed with IT that this is a priority within the Services Digital Transformation Workstream • No capacity within IT for commencement of work until June 2022
<p>Develop “Homeless Accommodation – Temporary and Emergency Policy” for the Homeless Service</p>	Service Manager	December 2022	--	Not Started 01/2022
<p>Full migration to new IT system (Open Housing) with all functionality required to manage the Temporary Accommodation Portfolio</p>	Service Manager	March 2023	---	Not Started 01/2022
<p>Complete full “end to end temporary accommodation process mapping” to be mapped to assign roles and responsibilities,</p>	Service Manager	March 2023	---	Not Started 01/2022

identify process delays and inefficiencies as well as document controls				
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LEGEND FOR PROGRESS AND TASK MONIOTIRING	RAG
COMPLETE	%
ON TRACK FOR COMPLETION	%
OFF TRACK FOR COMPLETION	%
NOT STARTED – NO CONCERN	---

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