

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 11 January 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 2021-2022
Purpose of Report:	To adopt the draft Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 2021 - 2022 and seek authorisation for its submission to Welsh Government.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter, Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Carolyn Michael, Accountant, Resource Management; Committee Reports; Legal Services; Mike Ingram, Head of Housing; Pam Toms, Operational Manager, Housing;
Policy Framework:	This report is consistent with the Policy Framework and Budget and is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Support Grant (HSG) Programme is the policy and funding framework for delivering housing related support to vulnerable people in different types of accommodation and across all tenures. At a local level the programme takes forward a number of strategic aims, reflecting community safety and health and social care and wellbeing objectives. It aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing-related support services that are cost effective, complement existing services and provide service users with the best possible outcomes. • The HSG is an amalgamation of three existing grants; the Supporting People Programme Grant, the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant. • In accordance with the Welsh Government Guidance for the Housing Support Grant, all local authorities are required to develop a one year Local Delivery Plan, which must be submitted to Welsh Government • The programme contributes to meeting the aims of 'Improving Lives and Communities - Homes in Wales' the National Housing Strategy and the ten year Homelessness Plan, with a strong emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. It is also essential in assisting the local authority to

fulfil its duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, and the Vale of Glamorgan's Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

- Welsh Government has not yet announced indicative grant allocations for 2021-2022.
- The budgets for the programmes delivered by the HSG each remained static for 2020-2021 from the previous year's allocation, giving a combined total of £3,586,847.52
- There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. All funding requirement identified for resourcing under the Housing Support Grant Programme is financed through grant funding from Welsh Government.
- The development and publication of the Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan is a requirement of Welsh Government to comply with the Housing Support Grant Guidance (Wales).
- It is therefore recommended that the Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 2021 - 2022 be approved and Cabinet agrees to its submission to Welsh Government in order to ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Guidance (Wales) February 2020.

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 2021 - 2022 be approved and Cabinet agrees to its submission to Welsh Government.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Guidance (Wales) July 2018.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Support Grant (HSG) Programme is the policy and funding framework for delivering housing related support to vulnerable people in different types of accommodation and across all tenures.
- 1.2 The HSG is an amalgamation of three existing grants; the Supporting People Programme Grant, the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant.
- 1.3 The programme contributes to meeting the aims of 'Improving Lives and Communities - Homes in Wales' the National Housing Strategy and the ten year Homelessness Plan, with a strong emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. It is also essential in assisting the local authority to fulfil its duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, and the Vale of Glamorgan's Homelessness Prevention Strategy.
- 1.4 At a local level the programme takes forward a number of strategic aims, reflecting community safety, health and social care and wellbeing objectives. It aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing-related support services that are cost effective, complement existing services and provide service users with the best possible outcomes.
- 1.5 In accordance with the Welsh Government Guidance for the HSG, all local authorities are required to develop a one year Local Delivery Plan for 2021-2022, which must be submitted to Welsh Government.

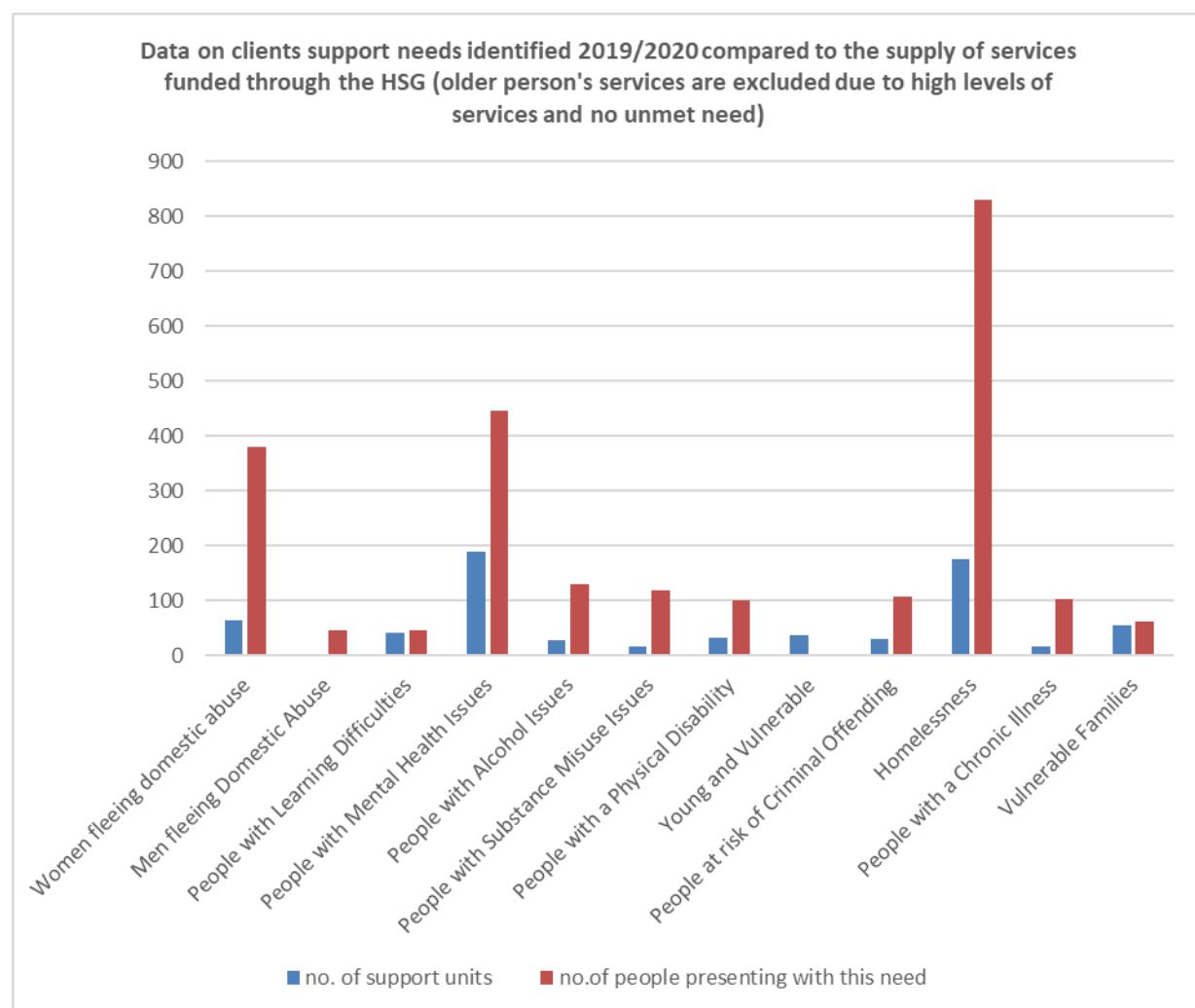
2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is a copy of the HSG Delivery Plan 2021 - 2022.
- 2.2 Local Authorities have not as yet received their indicative allocations for 2021-2022.
- 2.3 The budget remained static for all three programmes delivered by the HSG from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 creating a combined total of £3,586,847.52

- 2.4** The decisions were made based on financial modelling, meetings with providers, needs mapping information and service reviews. The analysis and approach taken are outlined in the HSG Delivery Plan attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.5** Work will continue to identify savings going forward to meet gaps in service, address the additional pressures created by the Covid-19 Pandemic and to protect against future potential cuts to the grant.
- 2.6** In addition to addressing the approach to any budget cuts and additional pressures resultant of the pandemic, the HSG Delivery Plan outlines the evidence collected on the support needs of vulnerable people in 2019/20 and the existing services being delivered, in order to evidence their continuation and the decisions on new service priorities for development.
- 2.7** An assessment of the support needs of all individuals who have contacted the Housing Division and other voluntary and statutory sector agencies in 2019/20 has been undertaken and through this 'self-assessment' process all of these identified that they had a support need. The issue most people identified as a need was homeless/potentially homeless followed by mental health.
- 2.8** As part of our needs mapping, additional needs data was collected from the Housing Solutions Team for the cohort of people placed in emergency accommodation as a result of the pandemic.
- 2.9** Table 1: Data on Clients Needs placed in emergency accommodation by the local authority since the start of the pandemic identified June 2020:

Lead need	Number of people presenting with this issue (please note a number of clients in emergency accommodation did not have disclosed needs when being placed and the actual number will therefore be higher)
Mental Health	2
Drug and Alcohol	2
Criminal Justice	1
Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol	3
Mental Health and Criminal Justice	0
Drug and Alcohol and Criminal Justice	2
Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol and Criminal Justice	20

- 2.10** Our needs mapping shows that our priority service development area for 2021-2022 is Supported Accommodation for people with complex needs, followed by Supported Accommodation for people with Mental Health issues.
- 2.11** Graph 1: Data on Clients Needs identified 2019/20 compared to the Supply of Services funded through the HSG Programme apart from Older People due to high levels of services and no unmet need.



3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** Looking to the long term - the Housing Support Grant Programme supports vulnerable people to attain the life skills required to maintain their home, integrate into the community and to live independently in the long term.
- 3.2** Taking an integrated approach - local service decisions are made by the Supporting People Planning Group which includes representatives from Housing, Social Services, Health and the Probation Service. In addition consultation is

carried out with managers of providers of services, front line workers and people who have lived experience of our services.

- 3.3** Involving the population in decisions - not only are the needs of service users monitored to ensure that the correct services are delivered to meet their individual needs, but feedback is collated from them during each service review to inform service improvement and future commissioning decisions. In addition, each service provider is required to work with the service user to enable them to solve problems themselves in the future. A key message delivered by the Housing Support Grant programme is "doing with" rather than "doing for" the service user in order to reduce dependency on services and enable the service user to live independently in the future.
- 3.4** Working in a collaborative way - the Housing Support Grant Programme places collaboration and coproduction at the core and these principles are monitored on a local, regional and national level through regular service reviews
- 3.5** Understanding the root causes of issues and preventing them - the Supporting People Team is required to collect needs data on clients on an annual basis in order to inform service commissioning and delivery.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. All funding requirement identified for resourcing under the Housing Support Grant Programme is financed through grant funding from Welsh Government.
- 4.2** It should be noted that the Council has not developed an exit strategy for Housing Support Grant funded services, as the effect of a total loss of funding from Welsh Government would affect support services throughout Wales, leading to the closure or severe restrictions to the services of voluntary support organisations that are funded in this way. This is an unlikely scenario given that Supporting People, which makes up the substantial part of the Housing Support Grant was introduced in 2003 and the number of people requiring the services is continuing to increase across Wales. It is expected that this trend will continue in the future with the introduction of the changes to the Homelessness Legislation in April 2015 from the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the continuing roll out of Universal Credit.

Employment

- 4.3** There is also a requirement on the Supporting People Team in the Council to continue on an annual basis to ensure that all projects remain strategically relevant to the Council and to reconfigure them if they are no longer required. In addition, the projects are monitored by the Team to ensure that they continue to

provide suitable value for money support to vulnerable people, including where appropriate assistance into training and employment.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** The development and publication of the Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan is a requirement of Welsh Government to comply with the Housing Support Grant Guidance (Wales).

5. Background Papers

- (i) Welsh Government Document - Housing Support Grant (HSG) Guidance (Wales) February 2020.
- (ii) Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 2021-2022.



VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL



Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan

2021 - 2022

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Housing Support Grant (HSG) Delivery Plan

2021-2022

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Housing Support Grant (HSG) Delivery Plan

2021 – 2022

1. Introduction

The Vale of Glamorgan Housing Support Grant Strategy outlines the need for housing related support funded by the Housing Support Grant (HSG) in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The HSG is an amalgamation of three existing grants; the Supporting People Programme Grant, the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant.

The 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. The HSG does not fund the statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, instead HSG funded services augment, complement and support the statutory service to ensure that the overall offer authorities provide helps people into the right homes with the right support to succeed. It supports vulnerable people to address the, sometimes multiple, problems they face, such as debt, employment, tenancy management, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and mental health issues. Support is person centred, aimed at supporting people to secure and maintain sustainable housing by addressing their needs and working with them to develop the skills needed to maintain a tenancy.

The HSG came into being in April 2019 following the Welsh Government funding flexibilities pathfinder project. A Ministerial decision was made in October 2018 to form two grants from the Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Grant (EIPS) work, separating the housing-related grants from non-housing elements for all local authorities. Consequently, from April 2019, the Welsh Government established a Children and Communities Grant (CCG), encompassing Flying Start, Families First, the Legacy Fund, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St David's Day Fund, Communities for Work Plus and Childcare and Play; and the single HSG. Welsh Government has set clear expectations that the CCG and the HSG should work in a seamless fashion, providing integrated services where appropriate.

At the core of the HSG is the prevention of homelessness. There is substantial flexibility in the use of the HSG funding, compared to the previous grants which it replaces.

The Vale of Glamorgan HSG Delivery Plan outlines the need for housing related support funded by the HSG. The continuing aim is for less dependence on institutions and statutory services and more independence. Therefore, there is a greater emphasis on people remaining in their own homes.



The Vale of Glamorgan Council aims to ensure that vulnerable people get the support they need. We want quality of life, safety, health and independence for all of the Vale of Glamorgan's community, and we intend that our HSG programme will fully contribute to our agenda for action.

This central purpose forms the basis of our Strategy. We believe that top-quality housing related support services are the key to preventing homelessness, enabling independent living across the continuum of support and care needs and helping those who are most vulnerable to find their place in the Vale of Glamorgan's community, underpinning the Vale of Glamorgan's vision to build 'Strong Communities with a bright future'

2. Strategic Priorities

The Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic placed extraordinary pressures on homelessness services across Wales to accommodate anyone with a housing need, regardless of whether they would be classed as vulnerable under the Housing (Wales) Act. Additional funding was made available by Welsh Government through the Phase 1 response to the pandemic in order to assist local authorities in fulfilling this additional duty, which has been used to fund an additional 116 units of bed and breakfast accommodation and other associated costs in the Vale of Glamorgan.

On 3rd June Welsh Government wrote to local authorities, setting out their vision for Phase 2 of the pandemic response to homelessness, which expects local authorities to develop long term settled accommodation for everyone that has a housing need, ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief and non repeated.

In response to this request, the Housing Solutions Team and Housing Support Grant (HSG) Team carried out a needs mapping exercise to establish all types of accommodation and support that will be needed in order to meet this challenge and ensure that everyone has the best possible chance of sustaining accommodation, and not returning to homelessness. The results of our needs mapping, show that we have accommodated people with a wide variety of support needs, ranging from low level floating support to some people with more challenging, complex needs who will require ongoing, intensive support if they are going to succeed in holding a sustained tenancy.

It was established early into the pandemic that Support Services would need to be delivered differently in order to protect our service users and front line workers. It was therefore agreed that support work would be carried out remotely wherever possible. This has led to some learning in terms of making efficiencies with our support services going forward, and although it is accepted that face to face support



is needed when we are able to return to more physical interaction, providers will continue to use a mixture of face to face and remote support when the restrictions in place to deal with the pandemic are lifted.

The pandemic has naturally led to more people needing support services as they deal with the financial and other pressures caused by the situation. It is expected that this upward trend of service demand will not stop when the pandemic restrictions are eased, as more people are still expected to feel the financial pressures further down the line as unemployment rises and evictions resume. The One Stop Shop for Housing Related Support commissioned in April 2020 will be crucial in meeting some of this demand, but a range of support options will be needed to meet the varying needs of our clients.

National Influences

The HSG programme makes a significant contribution to the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which is focused on homelessness prevention. It also reduces or prevents the need for, often more costly interventions, by other public services including the NHS and/or social care for individuals and families.

On a national scale the grant also contributes to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales (2010) and the Substance Misuse Delivery Plan (Wales) (2019 – 2022).

Current threats to the HSG include the redistribution of funding across Wales, and the potential for learning disability funding to be removed from the grant, as well as any impacts caused by Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. It is therefore essential that services are future proofed and we continue to have contingency plans for the essential services the programme funds should there be any cuts to our allocation.

Local Influences

The Vale's vision for housing is based on the five key aims identified within the Local Housing Strategy 2015-2020. These are:

- To provide more homes and more choice; ensuring that all residents have access to suitable and affordable accommodation.
- To improve homes and communities; by ensuring housing is maintained and fit for purpose.



- Increasing the supply of good quality, energy efficient homes in vibrant and sustainable communities.
- To provide better housing advice and support; ensuring that residents have access to the housing and services they need to live independently and plan their housing futures.
- To promote equality of access to housing and housing services.

On a local level the HSG also underpins the Corporate Plan 2020 to 2025 and the Public Service Board's *Wellbeing Plan 2018 to 2023 "Our Vale – Our Future"* which has identified four priority outcomes for the Vale of Glamorgan. The locally delivered HSG Programme will contribute to the priorities set out in the Wellbeing Plan 2018 to 2023 and assist in the delivery of the required outcomes in the following ways:

Ways in which the HSG Programme contributes to the Vale of Glamorgan's *Wellbeing Plan 2018 to 2023 "Our Vale – Our Future"*

Priority outcome 1

People are enabled to get involved to participate in their local communities and shape services locally.

The HSG programme will contribute to the following outcomes being achieved:

- People in the Vale of Glamorgan are linked into their local communities.
- People are informed of local services that they are able to access.
- There is a reduction in social isolation.
- People in the Vale of Glamorgan feel empowered to help shape the services that matter to them.
- People know how to get involved with shaping services that matter to them.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- Working with service users to link them into other local services that they will be able to continue to access when Housing Related Support services are no longer being provided to them.
- Informing service users of the services that are available to them locally.



- Ensuring effective working relationships between HSG providers and other local services.
- Informing service users of the ways in which they can help to influence service development.
- Ensuring that there are a wide range of options for people living in the Vale of Glamorgan to get involved in service development.
- Working to improve service user involvement within the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Service user consultation to establish how people living within the Vale of Glamorgan would like to be involved in shaping services.
- Encouraging people to engage in volunteering opportunities where appropriate.

Priority outcome 2

Poverty and inequalities linked to deprivation are reduced.

The HSG Programme will contribute to the following outcomes being achieved:

- Less people in the Vale of Glamorgan are living in poverty.
- Inequality across the Vale of Glamorgan is reduced.
- Differences in educational attainment, adult skill levels, income, crime rates and a range of health factors are reduced between the east and west side of the Vale of Glamorgan.
- The difference in the expected healthy life expectancy is reduced between residents living in the most and least deprived areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- Working with people living in the Vale of Glamorgan to ensure that income is maximised and that people are receiving the financial support they are entitled to.
- Working with residents of the Vale of Glamorgan to support them back into education, training and employment.
- Working with residents of the Vale of Glamorgan to ensure that they understand healthy lifestyle choices.



- Ensuring that people living in the Vale of Glamorgan are accessing health services appropriately.

Priority outcome 3

Children living in the Vale of Glamorgan are given the best start in life

- The HSG programme will contribute to the following outcomes being achieved:
- The number of children experiencing adverse childhood experiences (ACES) in the Vale of Glamorgan is reduced.
- Parents understand the way their behaviour impacts on their children's wellbeing.
- Children living in the Vale of Glamorgan are more resilient.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- Improving our understanding of adverse childhood experiences and their impact on people's overall lifecycle.
- Improving our understanding of how resilience is developed.
- Improving our understanding of harmful behaviours and how these can be reduced.
- Ensuring that service users are able to access and engage with support for health issues, substance misuse issues and other issues that contribute to the ACES agenda.
- Close working relationships between the HSG and Children and Communities Grant.

Priority outcome 4

People living in the Vale of Glamorgan value and enhance their environment.



The HSG Programme will contribute to the following outcomes being achieved:

- People living in the Vale of Glamorgan value their environment.
- People living in the Vale of Glamorgan understand how their actions can impact on the environment.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- People living in the Vale of Glamorgan are informed about the impact of their action on the environment.
- People are encouraged to recycle and carry out other environment enhancing activities.
- People living in the Vale of Glamorgan are informed about how to recycle, dispose of waste etc.

The Corporate Plan 2020 to 2025 identifies four new priorities:

- To work with and for our communities
- To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
- To support people at home and in their community
- To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment

These new objectives reflect the progress made by the Council in recent years, align to the Public Services Board's well-being objectives and provide a framework for improving well-being in the Vale over the next five years.

The HSG Programme will contribute to the delivery of each of these objectives in the following ways:

Ways in which the HSG Programme contributes to the Vale of Glamorgan's Corporate Plan 2020 to 2025

Objective 1

- To work with and for our communities

The HSG programme will contribute to the following objectives being achieved:



- Improve how we involve, engage and communicate with others about our work and decisions.
- Work innovatively, using technology, resources and our assets to transform our services so they are sustainable for the future.
- Develop our strong culture of good customer service aligned to the Council's values of being ambitious, open, together and proud.
- Promote equality of opportunity and work with the community to ensure we are responsive to the diverse needs of our customers.

The objectives will be achieved by:

- Increased promotion of the schemes delivered by the HSG and developing a One Stop Shop to encourage early intervention and prevention.
- Developing social media for the HSG to promote current and new schemes, as well as events and new initiatives.
- Continuing to collect feedback from people who use our services and other stakeholders as part of our contract monitoring process.
- Continuing to carry out equality impact assessments for all new schemes being developed and during any remodelling of services.

Objective 2

To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth

The HSG Programme will contribute to the following objectives being achieved:

- Work with schools, families and others to improve the services and support for those with additional learning needs.
- Work with education, training providers, businesses and other agencies to provide a range of advice, support and training opportunities which improve people's skills and readiness for work.
- Work with partners to ensure people can access appropriate money advice, information and debt support relating to housing, benefits, education, training and employment.



- Support and promote volunteering and community learning recognising the range of benefits to individuals and the community.

The objectives will be achieved by:

- The development of a tenure neutral floating support scheme for people with additional learning needs.
- Ensuring strong links exist between HSG funded services and employability services.
- Ensuring that adequate HSG funded services are in place to support people requiring housing related support including the development of a One Stop Shop, with a range of services providing support with budgeting, information and debt support relating to housing, benefits, education, training and employment.
- HSG funded support services continuing to promote volunteering and community learning opportunities, as well as working with partner organisations such as Communities4Work and exploring time banking opportunities.

Objective 3

To support people at home and in their community

The HSG programme will contribute to the following objectives being achieved:

- Provide person-centred care and support to adults in need.
- Undertake our safeguarding duties to protect people from harm by referring any concerns to the Vale of Glamorgan's Safeguarding Teams.
- Provide housing advice and support to prevent homelessness.

The objectives will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that individual support plans are developed for all individuals requiring HSG services.



- Ensuring that all staff working on the HSG programme receive appropriate safeguarding training and are aware of their responsibilities in regard to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that there are adequate housing support services in place and that statutory services are person centred and focussed on prevention.

Objective 4

To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment

The HSG Programme will contribute to the following objectives being achieved:

- Work with the community and partners to ensure the local environment is clean, attractive and well managed.

The objectives will be achieved by:

- Supporting our clients to understand the impact they can have on our environment, and encouraging recycling etc.

The HSG Delivery Plan should be read in conjunction with the Vale of Glamorgan's Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 to 2022 (attached at annex A and B).

Key priorities identified within the Homelessness Prevention Strategy are shown below. The HSG will contribute to these in the following ways:

Priority Outcome 1

Early intervention/ prevention in order to encourage better, more targeted, prevention work to reduce the number of households experiencing the trauma of homelessness.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- Joint working between the Supporting People Programme, the Housing Solutions Team and Shared Regulatory Services including ensuring a Housing Solutions presence on all Supporting People Gateway Panels.



- Pre-tenancy work with service users where required.

Priority Outcome 2

Improved access to services/ information for the service user to assist them to address the causes of homelessness and to make informed decisions on the correct solution to their housing problem.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- The introduction of a One Stop Shop for Housing Support Services complimented by other housing related services.
- Evaluating current social media exposure and identify future opportunities.
- Advertising services in critical areas such as Job Centre, GP surgeries etc.

Priority Outcome 3

Ensuring suitable accommodation and support is available by making more effective use of the private rented sector, and clients are referred to Housing Support Services.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- The continuation of the Private Rented Sector Team based within Housing Solutions.
- The introduction of a Single Point of Access to Supporting People Services to ensure that people are prioritised appropriately.
- A dedicated support service for people accommodated through the Vale Assisted Tenancy Team in the private rented sector.
- Regular monitoring of HSG Services to ensure that services are delivering against the required outcomes and remain strategically relevant.
- Continued working relationships between the Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme (VATS) and Environmental Health to ensure that all properties utilised by the VATS scheme are free from Category 1 Hazards.
- Continued work between the VATS scheme and Environmental Health to enforce the requirements set by Rent Smart Wales.



Priority Outcome 4

Ensuring service users are provided with a client centred and holistic service.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- Regular reviews of HSG funded services.
- Consultation with service users and front-line staff.

Priority Outcome 5

Improving the quality of advice for all households threatened with homelessness along with the required, advice and information.

The outcomes will be achieved by:

- Reviewing and updating information currently available regarding the Housing Solutions Service and associated advice on website.
- Creating a list of documents and links on the website in conjunction with the Communications Team.
- Reviewing information currently available from the Housing Solutions Service relating to partner organisations; amending/updating current info and creating a list of documents and links required to be uploaded through liaison with relevant partners.
- Providing shadowing opportunities to key partners to ensure the support and advice being provided is consistent.
- Utilising the One Stop Shop for Housing Related Support Services, which is available 6 days per week, offering advice and support to people on demand.

Working across traditional geographical and service boundaries has been a priority for the Supporting People Programme since its inception in 2003. The introduction of Regional Collaborative Committees (RCC) in 2009 strengthened this commitment by bringing key agencies together across the region. The new grant removes the governance role of the RCC, while continuing the spirit of collaborative and regional working with the introduction of Regional Housing Support Collaborative Groups (RHSCG).

The Housing Support Grant aims to work across the traditional boundaries of the many different organisations that are responsible for services for vulnerable people. We recognise that our agenda for health, housing, social care and community safety can only be achieved effectively through modern partnerships, which share objectives,



programmes and operational working methods. Welsh Government has therefore provided a platform for the HSG to be represented at the Regional Partnership Board (RPB), through the RHSCG to ensure that strong working relationships across a variety of sectors continue to be a priority under the grant, despite the dissolution of the Regional Collaborative Committees.

During the initial phase of the Covid-19 Pandemic the regional post was repurposed to assist with data collection for the Homeless Network and Welsh Government, as regional work was taken off the agenda to allow local authorities to deal with the crisis response to the pandemic. Welsh Government has now repurposed the regional post back to its original function and regional working is a priority again. The Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff City Council are working with the Regional Partnership Board to establish the governance arrangements for the new RHSCG.

3. Delivery Priorities

In 2020 the grant allocation for Supporting People remained static for the financial year at £3,466,829. This was merged with the Homelessness Prevention Grant and the Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant, which received grant funding of £110,496 and £9,522.52 respectively, to form the Housing Support Grant with a combined value of £3,586,847.52. Indicative allocations have yet to be announced by Welsh Government for 2021-2022.

The new HSG guidance was issued in January 2020 and implemented on 1st April 2020. The guidance gives more autonomy to Local Authorities to allocate the grant based on the need of the local area. The emphasis on the grant is to underpin the homelessness agenda by commissioning complementary services to assist people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to find or sustain suitable accommodation. The message from Welsh Government underpinning the new guidance is that homelessness should be rare, brief and un-repeated.

Achievements in 2019-2020

A One Stop Shop for Housing Related Support was commissioned, with the service commencing digitally on 6th April 2020. The building itself is currently being refurbished in a way that will allow people to socially distance in line with Welsh Government recommendations.

The HSG Team worked with Social Services colleagues to reduce the funding to the Learning Disability Schemes and ensure we are only funding housing related support. A new floating support service commenced on 1st February 2020 based solely on need and not tenure.

A new service dedicated to working with the private rented sector was piloted. This service has the added value of making the offer made by the Local Authority's Housing



Solutions Team more attractive to private sector landlords by offering intensive support to every client accommodated through the Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme.

Eight additional units of supported accommodation were commissioned to accommodate people with criminal justice issues. The additional units are helping to address some of the need created for this client group since prison leavers ceased being part of the priority need order under the new Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Priorities for 2020-2021

The Council's Supporting People Team continue to liaise with service providers and service users to ensure the services provided are meeting the needs of the people who use them as well as improving the efficiency of the programme in order that more people can be supported at the point they need it.

Measures identified to reduce the budget and not affect front line services are:

1. Continue to monitor the throughput of services and the length of time people are supported in order to prevent the waiting list from becoming backlogged.
2. Work closely with the Housing Solutions Team and Shared Regulatory Services to administer the new Housing Support Grant effectively and ensure compliance with Welsh Government Grant Conditions.
3. Continue to monitor supply and demand to ensure that all services remain strategically relevant and funding is targeted appropriately.
4. Continue to monitor any new initiatives that develop within the sector in order to establish if any of these are suitable to implement in the Vale of Glamorgan.
5. Continue to make best use of and develop resources available in the private rented sector.
6. Ensure that the principles developed by the End Youth Homelessness Cymru Group are embedded in our work with young people.
7. Continue to maximise the housing solutions available within the private rented sector.
8. Ensure relevant actions and initiatives of best practice identified through the Housing Action Group are considered for delivery.
9. Ensure the HSG continues to underpin the actions being delivered through the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2022.
10. Reconfigure services as necessary to meet the demand on the sector.

Background for Analysis

The data at Annex C shows levels of unmet need across the Vale of Glamorgan divided by client group. This, along with data obtained on the additional pressures created by the pandemic and consultation with providers, including front line workers and service users has informed the basis of commissioning decisions, along with the deliverability of each scheme.



We believe it is important to recognise that clients who require accommodation would in the main put homelessness as their lead issue, even though in many cases they had other very high support needs. This has been evidenced in the past from support plans, which have shown that in most cases clients have a dual or triple diagnosis and once in accommodation these other support needs come to the fore. This year homelessness is again the client group showing as having the highest unmet, with mental health appearing as the second highest area of unmet need in the Vale of Glamorgan. In response to meeting the duties placed on us by the pandemic, the Vale of Glamorgan looked at the data from the Supporting People needs mapping in conjunction with data provided by the Housing Solutions Department and interrogated the data more carefully, to assess where there are dual or triple support needs that need to be met.

It is also important to note that although older people's services show an over subscription due to the amount of sheltered and alarm services, this is misleading as there is still a high demand for support services from older people. However, much of this need is now being met by the Older Person's drop in based within the Extra Care Scheme.

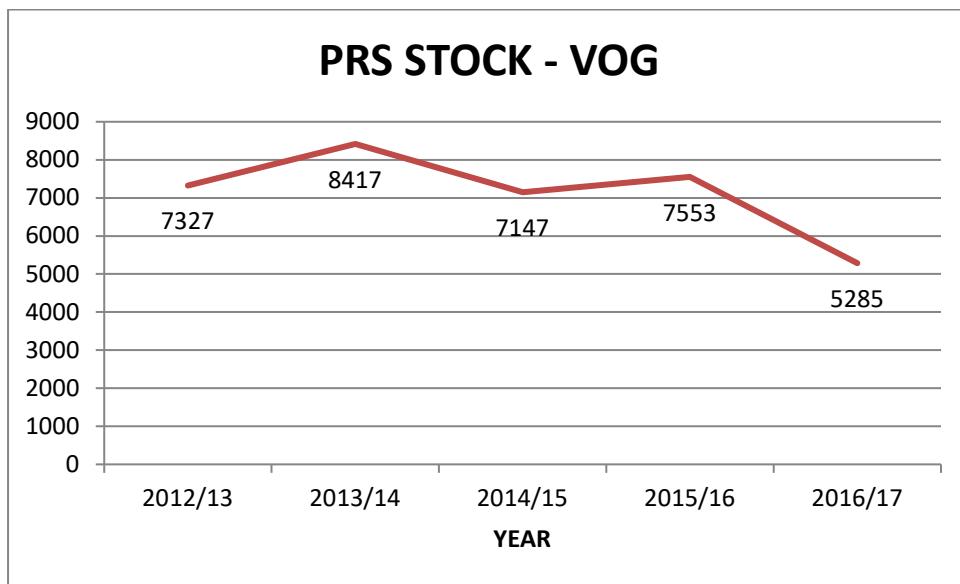
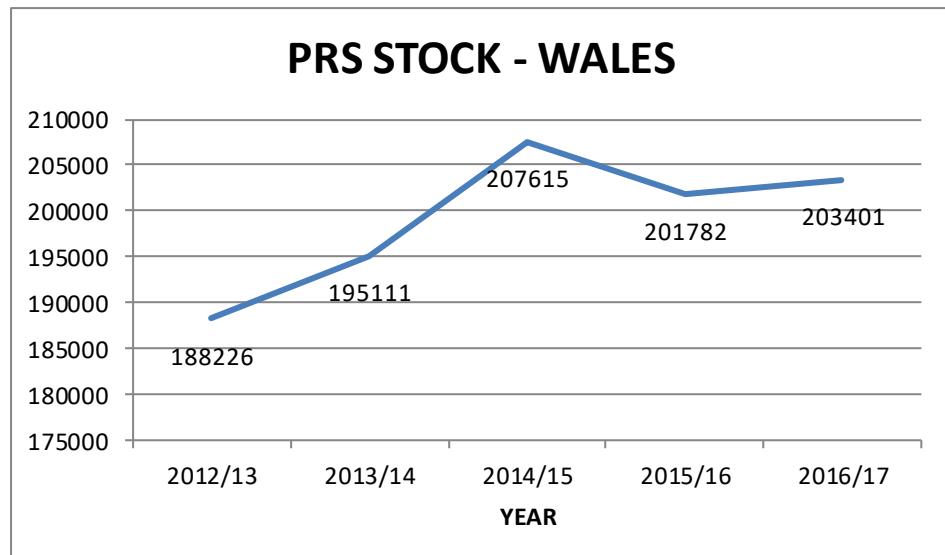
Between the 1991 census and the 2011 census the percentage of households renting privately in the Vale rose significantly from 9% in 1991 to 16% in 2011. Whilst the percentage increase may not appear too significant, the actual number of households renting privately more than doubled during this period, from 4,033 households in 1991 to 8,379 in 2011.

Over the same 20-30-year period of time the percentage of households living in the social rented sector declined, from 24% in 1981 to 12% in 2011. Social renting is the only tenure in the Vale of Glamorgan where the number of households declined, from over 9,000 households in 1981 to under 6,500 in 2011, a decline of over 30%. The 2011 Census showed that for the first time in 30 years the private rented sector had grown larger than the social rented sector in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Increasingly therefore there is a growing dependence upon the private rented sector and the Council is committed to further developing its relationship with private landlords, which is reflected in the Action Plan that accompanies this Strategy.

However, conversely to the rest of Wales the number of private rented sector properties in the Vale of Glamorgan has reduced significantly over the 5 years from 2012 to 2017, from 7327 in 2012 to 5285 in 2017. This does not match the trend in the rest of Wales as the diagram below demonstrates:





This has made reliance on the private rented sector more of a challenge in the Vale of Glamorgan than other areas in Wales. However, new initiatives have been introduced to make the offer to private landlords working with the Vale of Glamorgan's Housing Solutions Team more attractive. These initiatives include a dedicated private rented sector support service, which will be recommissioned in February 2021.

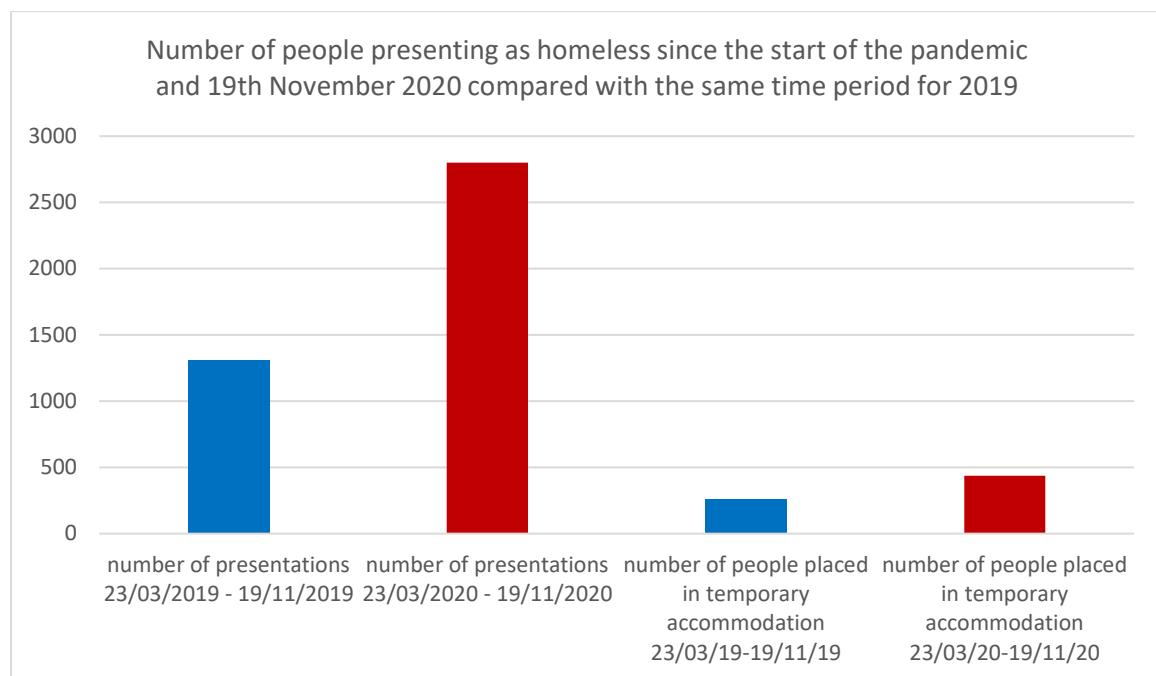
The main reason for homelessness presentations under Section 66 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 in the Vale of Glamorgan is "loss of rented or tied accommodation", with 40% of applicants presenting under Section 66 falling into this category. Only 25% of applicants in this category were owed a duty under Section 73 of the Act. The difference in this figure can be attributed to the successful prevention work undertaken



by the Housing Solutions Team as part of their duties under Section 66 of the Act alleviating homelessness at this early stage.

For all other categories the numbers presenting under Section 66 and Section 73 of the Act remained reasonably consistent until the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, which placed additional duties on local authorities to accommodate people regardless of their traditional “priority” status under the Housing (Wales) Act. However, it should be noted that the total number of presentations under Section 73 is considerably lower than those under Section 66 which reflects the preventative work that is now embedded in the service that has stopped a number of households escalating to a point of crisis.

The following graph shows the number of presentations and the number of people placed in temporary accommodation between the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic and 19th November 2020, compared with the same time period the previous year:



4. Local Commissioning Plan

In September 2018 the Vale Supporting People Team introduced a single point of access, commonly known as a Gateway, in order to prioritise clients based on need and also to assist in collecting more comprehensive statistics on need. A new referral form named the Housing Related Support (HRS) Form was also introduced at this stage to replace the original INAM form. This is now used by all agencies referring into the scheme including Housing Associations, Voluntary Sector Groups, the Local Health Board, Probation and internal services. A single assessment form was also introduced



at this point in order that needs can be more easily identified and duplication is reduced for both the client and the services that provide support.

The needs assessment information can also be broken down into area specific support needs so that if new funding should become available, services can be developed in the areas showing most need. In addition, providers have been approached to suggest ideas for “off the shelf” project proposals as required by the new guidance. These are projects that can be commissioned at short notice if funding becomes available. However, they will need to be strategically relevant and will be subject to approval via the traditional planning processes.

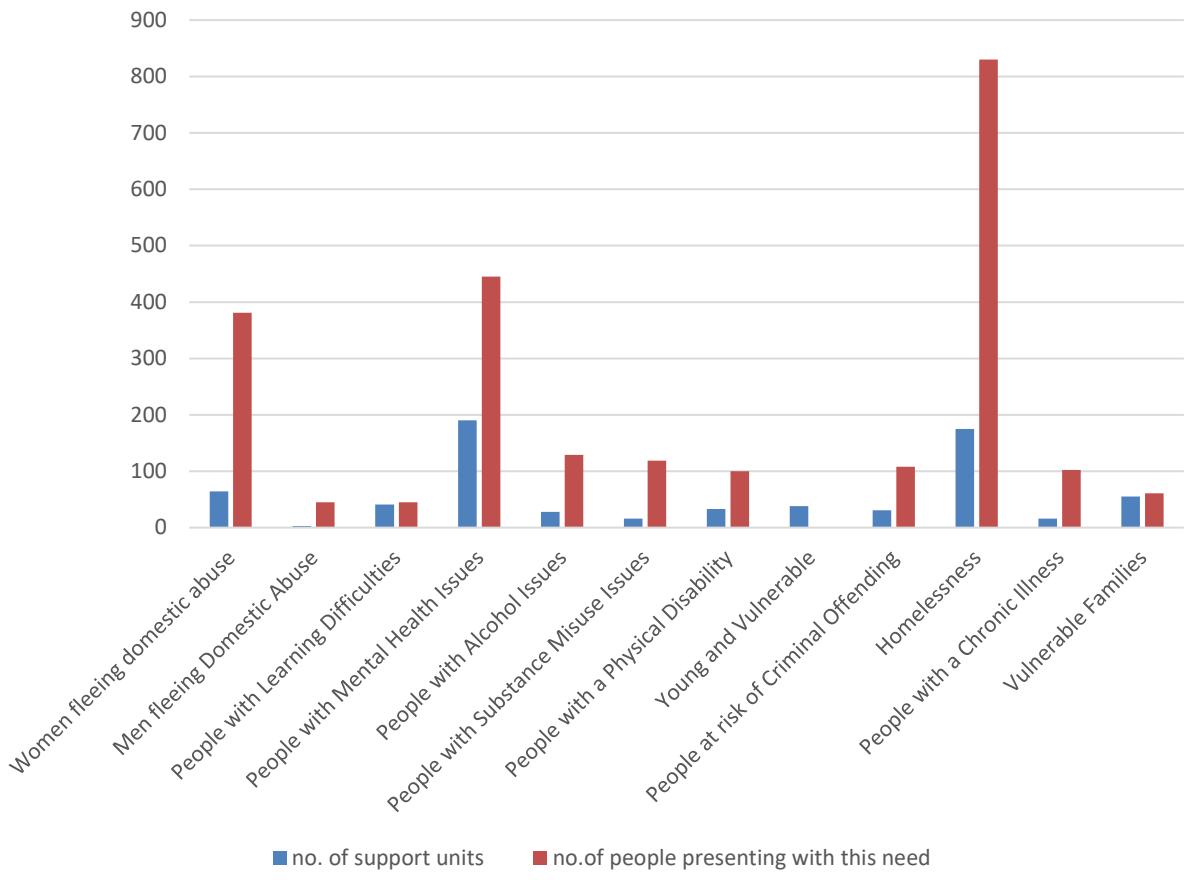
This year it has been important to interpret the traditional Supporting People data in conjunction with emerging data from the pandemic, as well as attempting to assess the likely ongoing impacts of the pandemic on homelessness, unemployment and the resulting support needs of our citizens. We are already seeing an increase in demand on homelessness and support services, and this is likely to continue as more people face financial hardship.

Identifying Gaps in Services

By combining the data collected over the last year and the additional information provided by the Housing Solutions statistics with the existing supply of services, a picture of the gaps in services emerge. These findings (see graph1 below) are presented to the core members of the Supporting People Local Planning Group in the Vale of Glamorgan who determine the future local service priorities for development.



Data on clients support needs identified 2019/2020 compared to the supply of services funded through the HSG (older person's services are excluded due to high levels of services and no unmet need)



Since the start of the pandemic, the Vale of Glamorgan has assisted an additional 438 people into emergency temporary accommodation, with 192 households currently in this type of accommodation (snapshot 19.11.2020) and the number continuing to grow. A number of these people have struggled to engage with housing and support services in the past and are now benefitting from stable accommodation and intensive support.

The table below shows the type of accommodation needed by lead category as per the Housing Support Grant waiting list and referrals for the period 31st March 2019 to 1st June 2020:

Lead need	Number of people awaiting accommodation with this lead need (snapshot 17/06/20)	Number of people presenting with this lead need between 31/05/19 and 01/06/20
Domestic Abuse	1 (female) 0 (male)	69
Mental Health	25	155



Drug and Alcohol	11	21
Young People (including those leaving the care system)	8	25
Criminal Justice	11	97
Vulnerable Families	3	55
Generic	28	258

Our priority area for service development during 2021-2022 will be to identify appropriate housing and support solutions for the cohort of people we have accommodated during the pandemic, ensuring that they don't return to homelessness wherever possible. In order to address this challenge Welsh Government made an extra £20 million available to local authorities across Wales through Phase 2 Funding in June 2020. The Vale of Glamorgan successfully bid for an additional 11 units of temporary accommodation to be built using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) which will be ready by the 31st March 2021. However, it is expected that all service users utilising this accommodation will have support needs in order to sustain accommodation in the long term, placing additional pressure on the HSG.

Commissioning Priorities for 2021-2022

We identified that many people accommodated during the pandemic have complex support needs and will not be ready for independent living in the short term. The Housing Solutions Team has looked at the main support needs of the people currently placed in emergency accommodation. This will be the main cohort in need of alternative accommodation in phase 2 of the Welsh Government's plans for homelessness. These are set out in the table below and demonstrate the complexity of the clients currently most in need of supported housing:

Lead need	Number of people presenting with this issue (please note a number of clients in emergency accommodation did not have disclosed needs when being placed and the actual number will therefore be higher)
Mental Health	2
Drug and Alcohol	2
Criminal Justice	1
Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol	3
Mental Health and Criminal Justice	0
Drug and Alcohol and Criminal Justice	2
Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol and Criminal Justice	20



In order to address these complexities it has been identified that a Complex Needs Hostel is needed in order to give clients the support they need. A Complex Needs Project is predominantly aimed at people whose needs span more than one support category, often the main presenting factors are mental health, substance misuse and criminal justice. When we add these groups together, there are currently 47 people on the HSG waiting list for supported accommodation. In addition we have 28 people waiting whose main identified need is a housing need, but also have other support needs including mental health, substance misuse and criminal justice, which are likely to be contributory factors to them losing accommodation. The Vale of Glamorgan is working with a private sector landlord to secure the accommodation needed, but due to the short term nature of the Phase 2 Funding the support element will be commissioned from the HSG.

Recommissioning during 2021-2022

Several HSG funded projects are due to be recommissioned during 2021/2022. These are:

- Young Person's Services (April 2021)
- Domestic Abuse Services (June 2021)
- Vulnerable Families Services (July 2021)
- Substance Misuse Services (July 2021)
- Several Generic Floating Support Services (June and July 2021)

During the recommissioning process we will streamline some of the contracts in order to make efficiencies with contract monitoring as well as achieving efficiencies for the providers in terms of back office functions etc. This will also lead to more robust contracts at a time when security of services is more crucial than ever.

Local Spend Plan

Project Type	Project Type Breakdown	Client Units	Spend Against Project Type
PRS Schemes		267	£105,000
Housing Led Services	Housing led	0	0
	Housing First (verified)	0	0
	Housing First (unverified)	0	0
Accommodation Only Services	General	1	£5000
	Cold weather provision	0	0
	Specific "dry" accommodation	0	0
	Specific "wet" accommodation	0	0
Rough sleeper outreach services		0	0
Mediation services		85	£9000



Day time drop in services		300	£350,000
Enforcement, investigation or compliance with housing legislation			£31,984
Activities designed to promote compliance with housing			£3,523
Floating Support	VAWDASV	20	£116,458
	Learning Disability	20	£89,771
	Mental health	237	£281,319
	Substance misuse and/or alcohol issues	37	£149,140
	Ex-offenders	5	£28,823
	Young people	32	£135,316
	Refugees	0	0
	Older people	60	£123,823
	Gypsy and Travellers	0	0
	Generic	64	£482,341
Temporary Supported Accommodation	Other	458	£111,897
	Learning Disability	33	£165,262
	Physical disability	0	0
	Mental health	22	£231,843
	Substance misuse and/or alcohol issues (wet accommodation)	0	0
	Substance misuse and/or alcohol issues (dry accommodation)	9	£61,320
	Ex-offenders	14	£72,474
	Young people	42	£464,096
	Older people	0	0
	Refugees	0	0
Permanent supported accommodation	Generic	0	0
	Other	18	£289,311
	Older people	0	0
Extra care services	Learning disability	0	0
	Other	0	0
Alarms	VAWDASV	0	0
	Other	2402	£82,114
Refuges	Male	0	0
	Female	5	£119,834
	Other	6	£35,000
Other		770	£42,198



5. Stakeholder engagement

1. The Supporting People Local Planning Group

The core members continue to meet to examine the needs data once it is collated.

The core members of the Supporting Planning Group are:

- Operational Manager Public Sector Housing (Chair)
- Operational Manager, Mental Health Services
- Operational Manager Public Health Wales
- Operational Manager Social Services
- Vale Manager, South Wales Area National Probation Service
- Vale Locality Lead Nurse, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- Voluntary Sector Representative

2. Consultation

As a Local Authority we recognise that in order to ensure any services being developed are fit for purpose a coproduction approach is essential. We therefore carry out consultation on a regular basis and through a variety of formats to capture as much information from our clients and stakeholders as possible.

3. The Supporting People Liaison Group

This is a forum for all Supporting People stakeholders and allows for the exchange of information and for all stakeholders to participate in the planning process. Meetings take place quarterly. This is an inclusive forum, to which service users are also invited.

4. Service User Consultation

In 2010 the Council commissioned external Consultants to work with service users to put together a Service User Participation Framework to set out how they wanted to engage with the Council, both on service improvement and new developments.

The responses received showed that service users did not want a formal engagement process. Whilst they were happy to be interviewed by Council staff at the time of service



reviews in order to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the support, they thought that their support provider participation events provided sufficient engagement opportunities for them and therefore did not want them replicated by the Council.

In response to this consultation, the Service User Consultation Framework was developed and the following procedures were introduced by the Council's Supporting People Team:

- At least 20% of both existing and former service users are interviewed as part of each service review (10% in alarm services).
- Posters and leaflets are available and circulated to service users to advise them how to contact and provide feedback to the Supporting People Team, if they wish.
- The Supporting People Team attends all support provider participation events, with a stall. A questionnaire is used to gather service user feedback.
- An annual Supporting People Newsletter is circulated to all service users.
- A web-based service user questionnaire is available on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website for completion.
- All support providers must provide an annual Service User Participation report detailing how service user views are gathered, the impact on the service, and how feedback is provided to the service users.
- Housing Solutions client satisfaction survey is completed to ensure the customer remains at the centre of the service and their care remains excellent.

The Regional Collaborative Committee also developed a Regional Service User Participation Framework in early 2015, which has been implemented by the Supporting People Team. The findings continued to reflect the position outlined above.

However due to the increased focus on service user involvement with the HSG Programme and developments in technology a new Service User Engagement Strategy Task and Finish Group was formed in 2018 by the RCC, consisting of the Supporting People Leads, the Regional Development Coordinator, provider and landlord representatives. This group held a consultation event with service users hosted by Cymorth Cymru in late 2018 which informed the direction of travel for the group. The group has developed a strategy to engage with service users in a variety of ways based on the information they learned from this event, including through the use of social media, online surveys and traditional face to face settings. A survey has been developed that will be used on the website in order to give service users another means to tell us what they want from support.



During 2019 we held two consultation events. One was aimed at managers of Supporting People funded services and other stakeholders. The other event was aimed at front line staff and service users. Both events were well attended and gave us lots of information to use in future service development. The overwhelming message from the events was that more “drop in” support services were needed so that service users can get support at the point they need it. We also asked how people would like this type of service provided and what they think would improve our current drop in services. This information helped to inform the service specification for the One Stop Shop as well as helping us establish the priorities for future commissioning.

Unfortunately formal consultation has been more of a challenge during 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic and therefore consultation events will be held ahead of recommissioning in 2021 to ensure that the services we plan are fit for purpose and meet the needs of our clients.

5. Links with the Children and Communities Grant (CCG)

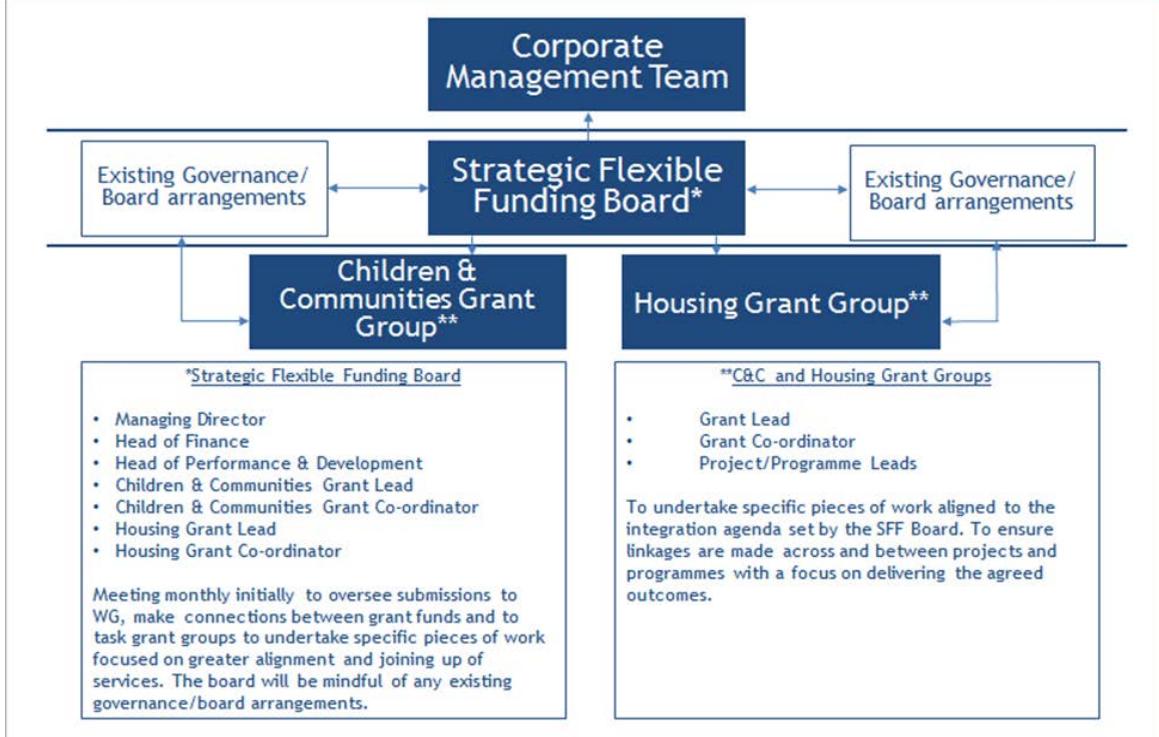
Excellent links already exist between the strategic and operational staff across both Grants.

The locally developed Poverty Alignment Group (PAG) was established in 2014 and had developed good links between many of the relevant partners involved in both the CCG Grant and HSG. More recently, in preparation for flexible funding, an overarching Flexible Funding board has been developed to ensure strategic oversight across both grants and further strengthen the links between the two new project groups. The diagram below shows the new local governance structure for the two grants.





Flexible Funding Grants - Draft Governance Structure



The two new groups are ensuring wider engagement and involvement of all the programme leads. Each of these groups has representation from the other grant. Historically the CCG coordinator was also an active member of the RCC and will continue to represent the CCG on the RHSCG as per Welsh Government Guidance.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is carried out for each new service that is developed and ahead of any changes to service delivery.

Appendices

Annex A: Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Annex B: Homelessness Prevention Action Plan

Annex C: Need and Supply Data used at Chapter 3



