

Meeting of:	Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 13 October 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 - 2022 - Monitoring Report
Purpose of Report:	Third update to Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee on progress implementing the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan
Report Owner:	Miles Punter - Director of Environment and Housing.
Responsible Officer:	Ian Jones - Housing Solutions Manager
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Councillor Margaret Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services Carolyn Michael, Operational Manager, Accountancy Committee Reports, Legal Services Mike Ingram, Head of Housing & Building Services Nick Jones, Operational Manager, Public Housing Services
Policy Framework:	This report is consistent with the Policy Framework and Budget.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 Act placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness services and to produce a Homelessness Strategy setting out how each Council, in partnership with other stakeholders, would identify and develop the services required to help and support those in housing need. • Following extensive consultation, a Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan were developed in the Vale of Glamorgan and adopted by Cabinet on 17th June 2019 (Cabinet Minute: C14 refers). These documents set out how the Council, with assistance from its partners would deliver the required strategic outcomes for clients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. • The Vale of Glamorgan Homelessness Prevention Action Plan covers the period 2018 to 2022 and is a working document which will be kept under constant review and updated as required. • The report also outlines the significant ongoing pressure on the Housing Solutions Service and support services resulting from the pandemic and the additional actions that have been taken.

Recommendations

1. That the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee continue to examine the progress to date in implementing the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix 1).
2. That the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee consider the additional actions included and the significant pressures on the service, its staff and resources as a result of the COVID pandemic.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that the actions in the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan are progressing and are driving service improvements.
2. For consideration.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 took effect on 27th April 2015 and placed a number of new duties on local authorities in respect of homelessness, which included the following;
 - To provide assistance to anyone threatened with homelessness irrespective of priority need or local connection.
 - To provide appropriate help and support to any homeless person to help secure a suitable home.
 - To provide assistance at an earlier stage.
 - To provide new powers to local authorities to discharge their homelessness duty into the private rented sector.
- 1.2 The Housing Wales Act 2014 is the biggest change in tackling homelessness in Wales since the first Homeless Person's Act commenced in 1977. Its aim was to transform homelessness by creating a modern safety net where no one is turned away without help.
- 1.3 Section 50 of the Act also required local authorities to undertake a Homelessness Review and to produce a Homelessness Strategy which set out how the Council in partnership with other stakeholders would address:
 - the prevention of homelessness;

- the availability of suitable accommodation for people who are homeless or may become homeless;
- the availability of appropriate support and assistance for people who are homeless or may become homeless.
- There is now a new obligation on the authority to assess and signpost EEA nationals to register for the EU settlement scheme before 30th June 2021 so that this group of people do not lose their rights to access housing, or a right to accommodation. This obligation has been recognised and training on this requirement is being provided to housing staff.

1.4 The adopted Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2022 and Action Plan set out the activities to be undertaken by the Council and its partners to deliver the required outcomes for clients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness including:

- people leaving prison or youth detention accommodation,
- young people leaving care,
- people leaving the regular armed forces of the Crown,
- people leaving hospital after medical treatment for mental disorder as an in-patient, and
- people receiving mental health services in the community.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

2.1 The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan has four themes and progress is being measured over the four years of the Strategy 2018-22 and reported quarterly to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee.

- To provide a robust and targeted prevention service
- To continue to develop and extend the availability of early housing advice and assistance.
- To ensure the most vulnerable are provided with support to maintain a home and to integrate into the community.
- To improve the support offered to private landlords to improve tenancy sustainability.

- 2.2** The required actions have been deemed low, medium and high to ensure that priority is given to the most important requirements of the service users and the service.
- 2.3** The overall aim of the Strategy is to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity to help mitigate the pressures and challenges to both service users and the support services across the Vale of Glamorgan and this support is accessible to all and continues to be monitored to reflect and respond to current and future challenges.
- 2.4** Despite the additional challenges from to the pandemic, progress has continued as shown in the Action Plan as attached at Appendix 1, and apart from three are now on track for completion. This remain the situation however with the recent relaxation of rules these actions may soon be able to be progressed.

The three actions which have been affected by the pandemic are:

- A003 – hospital discharge procedure
 - A005 – staff shadowing opportunities
 - A010 – the delivery of tenancy ready training within the Prison system.
- 2.5** Since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, the Housing Solutions Service has received approximately 5,200 homelessness enquiries requesting advice and support. Since the start of the pandemic, the service has placed 1064 households into all forms of temporary accommodation of which 100 households are currently in bed and breakfast hotel (B&B) units in hotels and 127 are in other forms of temporary accommodation. They all continue to be managed very intensively with Housing Solutions staff visits, drop-in surgeries and floating support services, as well as Police welfare support.
- 2.6** Since 27th March 2020 in response to the significant additional temporary accommodation pressures resulting from the pandemic, the Council has procured a total of 125 units of B&B accommodation in three hotels, of which 100 units are currently occupied. Out of these 100 households, 54 are single occupants under 35 years, making it essential that move-on solutions are maximised across all tenures to help alleviate the extreme pressure on temporary accommodation resources.
- 2.7** The pandemic continues to adversely affect housing options within the private rented sector and although letting agents and landlords are now fully operational this solution within this tenure of housing continues to prove challenging despite the hard work of the team. In an attempt to understand the needs and wishes of private landlords a recent social media survey and promotional initiative is being promoted. We have received an number of responses to this and the Housing Solutions Team is currently collating this information so it can be reviewed.

- 2.8** All social housing is now being advertised to pre-pandemic numbers and family accommodation is being allocated swiftly offering prompt solutions. Single household accommodation continues to prove challenging due to the significantly greater pressure on resources to that of pre-pandemic days.
- 2.9** Court possession proceedings continue to take place and now prioritised for serious cases of anti-social behaviour and domestic violence. Six months' notice periods are now required to be given by all landlords including Social Housing Providers and this looks like it will remain, with a likely legislative change in the Spring of 2022. The previous loan scheme introduced by Welsh Government is now replaced with a grants scheme allowing persons who are working to apply to Local Authorities for financial support with rent arrears. To date we have had no eligible claims processed. This continues only for rent arrears that may have accrued as a direct result of the pandemic. With regards benefit claimants the Housing Benefit Discretionary Payment scheme remains the route for financial support. Some private landlords are also continuing to insist on 6 months' rent being paid in advance and more and more landlords are also insisting on guarantors. This comes as a direct result of the increase of notice periods.
- 2.10** Given the significant and well documented challenges being experienced securing alternative permanent and temporary accommodation allowing the current reliance upon the 3 local hotels particularly a Task & Finish Group have been created as you are aware form members of the Scrutiny Committee to help support the Council's Housing Solutions Service with this challenge.
- 2.11** The focus of this group will be to examine housing and homelessness provision as part of the recovery phase ('Phase 2') that the Council will be undertaking due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.12** It's objectives and purpose being to review the key areas of current and in the near future housing and homelessness provision and policies – allocation priorities, emerging legislative and funding challenges or developments – and to offer recommendations on how to approach, implement or to improve on these in order to ensure that temporary and permanent accommodation can continue to be offered to the homeless once WG emergency legislation ends in September 2021.

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 Vale of Glamorgan Homelessness Prevention Strategy will support 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 - the Homelessness Prevention Strategy will be continually reviewed including by the Supporting People Local Planning Group and the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group. These are made up of Members and senior officers from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, including Housing, Social Services, Health and the Probation Service to ensure homelessness support services remain strategically relevant and enable the development of new services where required with partners, to support any emerging themes.
- 3.3** Involving the population in decisions - the needs of service users are monitored to ensure that the correct services are delivered to meet their individual requirements. In addition, the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 has been designed to help encourage households in need to take responsibility for their housing circumstances and to manage the options and solutions available to them. Support and assistance are provided by the services involved to enable them to learn to solve problems themselves in the future. The key message delivered by the Homelessness Service and the Housing Support Grant Programme is "doing with" rather than "doing for" the service user, in order to reduce dependency on services and to enable the service user to live independently in the future.
- 3.4** Working in a collaborative way - the Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy places collaboration and coproduction at its core through the consultation process undertaken to develop it and the ongoing integration with the Housing Support Grant Programme where these principles are monitored on a local, regional and national level through regular reviews.
- 3.5** Understanding the root causes of issues and preventing them - the Council's Housing Solutions Service is responsible for delivering the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan and along with the Supporting People Team is required to collect needs data on clients quarterly and annually in order to inform service delivery and commissioning.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. The Strategy is being delivered within existing departmental resources which includes the Housing Support Grant (HSG) received from Welsh Government.

Employment

- 4.2** There is a statutory requirement on the Vale of Glamorgan Council to ensure appropriately experienced staff are in place to manage the statutory duties within the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Current staffing levels are appropriate in

managing the demands, however, should demands increase the position will be reviewed.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** The development and adoption of a reviewable four-year Homelessness Prevention Strategy is a statutory requirement of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 4.4** Wider consideration is also now being given to applicants in housing need registered with Homes4U, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's choice based letting scheme to consider if available accommodation can be adapted to meet the needs of applicants with additional and specific needs..

5. Background Papers

Housing (Wales) Act 2014 & Code of Guidance.

Operational Delivery Update Plan (Appendix 1)

High priority actions – YR 1 and YR 2 of Strategy
 Medium priority actions – YR 2 and YR 3 of Strategy
 Low priority actions – YR 3 and YR 4 of Strategy

- To provide a robust and targeted homelessness prevention service

Ref.	Action	Priority	RAG Status	Progress
A001	Undertake a feasibility study to determine costs of a Bespoke IT system	Low		<p>Progress delayed due to Covid, however the services of an external consultant has been secured and the completion of a written system specification is awaited on which to consult with staff prior to going out to the market to procure a system.</p> <p>2019/20 Update: Tender opportunity through Sell2 Wales in June 2020 with aim to appoint preferred supplier by the end of September 2020. New systems to be implemented over the following 18 months.</p> <p>Feb 21 Update: Informal demonstrations have now taken place by all potential suppliers following completion of pre-market exercise. Secondary internal meetings to be arranged with all Service Mangers to discuss prioritisation of individual service requirements. This action will be carried over given the timescales indicated.</p> <p><i>Sept 21 Tender process underway</i></p>

A002	Ensure the Council continues to meet its statutory Homelessness obligations as stipulated within the Housing (Wales) Act 2014	High		<p>Since the pandemic Welsh Government has amended the way in which local authorities provide homelessness data. From March 2020 all local authorities in Wales were required to provide weekly data on the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of emergency accommodation units available • The number of people in emergency accommodation • The number of people moved into permanent accommodation • A snapshot of the breakdown of households in emergency accommodation on a specific date <p>In August the frequency changed to monthly collections and the data snapshot for emergency accommodation is now required on the last Friday of each month.</p> <p>In addition to this the service also provides internal statistics to measure performance. In quarter one the Vale Housing Solutions Team had a successful prevention percentage of 88% and 80% for quarter two.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: Statistical information continues to be provided to WG and although still high Q3 prevention success was 75%. This Action is a continually required aspect of the service so will remain amber rag rated for the duration of the Strategy.</p> <p><i>Sept 21 Update: Statistical information continues to be provided to WG which are evidencing the reduction is the homelessness prevention possibilities as a direct result of the Pandemic, despite the Housing Solutions Team best efforts. Homelessness prevention as be adversely impacted upon due also to the change in legislation which has removed the ability to complete Priority Need investigations meaning all who present without their own accommodation must be accommodated</i></p>
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A003	Develop a robust hospital discharge process for homelessness clients who do not meet the criteria for the Discharge Solutions Service	High		<p>Progress delayed due to Covid, however communication between services and wards following initial meetings and discussions is very good and ongoing.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: Ward visits still affected by Covid, whoever discharge process in place continue to prove effective with clear communication for staff and patients. The Discharge Solutions Service are working with the Vale's Communication Team to create a short promotional video to promote the service while they are unable to have a physical presence in the hospitals.</p> <p><i>Sept 21 Update: The Hospital Discharge Team are now having a presence in Llandough Hospital and attending weekly DTOC meetings. The OT is however on maternity leave until approximately April 2022. No ICF funding is available to cover this post so cover has been arranged for a separate OT post but their responsibilities are wider than the original ICF funded post. The Team are now dealing with cases outside of the traditional age range and assisting all DTOC patients connected to the Vale.</i></p>
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A005	Maintain close working relationships with all relevant agencies	High		<p>Shadowing opportunities have been suspended due to Covid, however close working relationship have been maintained ensuring that services continue to be effective. As a result of Covid a multi-agency Central Co- ordination Cell has been created which meets fortnightly to discuss service pressures, emerging themes and new initiatives. Representation at these meetings includes Health, Police, Probation, Community Safety, Housing, Registered Social Landlords and Support agencies. These meetings are acknowledged as good practice and may continue after the pandemic.</p> <p><i>Feb 2021 Update: This action is very unlikely to be completed by March 2021 or the foreseeable future due to the pandemic, the ongoing social distancing requirements and the need for staff to work from home. Alternative solutions will be explored when capacity allows.</i></p> <p><i>Sept 21 Update: Close working relationships continue with partner agencies however shadowing initiatives remain on hold at present.</i></p>
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A007	Housing Support Grant (HSG) to continue to fund Homeless Prevention Services	High		<p>Homelessness prevention services again funded for 20/21, and Welsh Government are continuing to work on finalising the outcomes framework. Regional work still ongoing to develop the structure and remit of the new RCG (Regional Collaborative Group) which replaces the RCC (Regional Collaborative Committee).</p> <p>2019/20 Update: HSG consultation meetings are ongoing with Welsh Government to develop the new grant monitoring and reporting framework. The HSG Spend Plan has also been submitted to Welsh Government for 20/21.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: The HSG continues to fund homelessness prevention services as demonstrated in the HSG delivery plan 2021-2022, approved by Cabinet on 11/01/21. The pandemic has led to closer alignment of work between the Supporting People and Housing Solutions Teams, with new initiatives being developed to support people re housed during the pandemic, both in the short and longer term, including floating support and supported accommodation. options.</p> <p>Sept 2021 Update: The HSG continues to fund Homelessness Prevention Services. Several services have recently been recommissioned in line with the commissioning schedule, including generic floating support, mental health floating support, domestic abuse floating and static support and drug and alcohol floating support. Several new projects are due to be commissioned in the next 12 months, including supported accommodation for people with complex needs.</p>
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A032	Produce and deliver EEA training to Housing Service to help prevent homelessness.	High		<p>Feb 2021 Update: New action - Initial discussions taken place with Legal Services to help develop and facilitate training initiatives on the authority's new EEA obligations in order that the service is able to appropriately support and signpost EU National in relation to their access to housing.</p> <p><i>Sept 21 Update: Legal have developed an easy read information document that can be referred to when supporting this category of clients in housing need. In addition, further training is being arranged and will be delivered by the end of 2021. External training is also being considered by WG. We have responded to requests for information re this and acknowledged that additional training would be welcomed.</i></p>
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- To continue to develop and extend the availability of early housing advice and assistance.

Ref.	Action	Target date	RAG Status	Progress
A009	Develop Rolling Homes4u advert	High		<p>Despite recent delays in progress due to Covid, the Homes4U & Housing Management Steering Group met in September to continue discussions and the Housing Solutions Manager requested written evidence of the need for a rolling advert from the RSL partners. The Steering Group is meeting again in October to discuss this further and to discuss the review of the Homes4U allocations policy.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: Following a number of meetings with Homes4U Registered Social Letting Partners, a decision has been made that until the new Housing IT system is in place the Homes4U advert will increase in frequency. From April '21 all social housing will be advertised weekly, which will have a positive impact on temporary accommodation resources by reducing the time a household will spend in interim accommodation. This will in turn reduce the void times, reduce rent loss for social housing providers including the local authority. All applicants will be notified of this operational change through the Homes4U advert, social media, including the Council email bulletins. In addition, C1V Staff and third sector support providers will notify applicants of this change to ensure the Council's more vulnerable applicants are aware of the change.</p> <p><i>Sept 21 Update: A rolling/continuous advert is still an initiative being considered by the Council however this will be reviewed in more detail when the new IT system is in place offering the software solutions. In the meantime, the weekly adverts will continue.</i></p>
A010	Explore the possibility of developing Pilot Tenancy Ready Training opportunities within HMP Cardiff	High		No further progress since initial meeting with Welsh Government and suspended at present due to Covid guidelines. This will progress when

				<p>social distancing rules are relaxed.</p> <p><i>2019/20 Update: Meeting held with Welsh Government in January 2020 to progress this following a request to deliver a pilot project alongside Welsh Government and Cardiff CC before expansion across Wales. Awaiting further details from Welsh Government. The pilot will also help develop a new risk assessment and information sharing tool between Prisons, Probation, Housing and other key involved agencies. On track for completion by June 2020.</i></p> <p><i>Sept 21 Update: Unfortunately, this action is not being supported by Justice agencies and felt that it would duplicate the initiatives currently being delivered in Prison. This may however be revisited if it to be believed that Prison initiatives are not effective.</i></p>
A011	Maximise the use of social media	High		<p>Following initial meeting and legal advice the use of Facebook cannot be a tool used in the investigation of homelessness applications due to data protection regulations. Meeting arranged in October to discuss a social media private landlord survey to help maximise the landlords engaging with the Council's Housing Solutions Services.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: A SNAP survey is currently being developed and will be circulated to private rented sector landlord along with promotional material advertising the Council's current private rented scheme (VATS) to try to attract new landlords to the scheme and increase the housing opportunities for households facing homelessness.</p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: Survey and promotional literature now available for private rented sector landlord to compete. Information being captured and will be considered when developing a private rented sector landlord offer. Landlords further encourage to compete survey and feedback their views at the recent Landlord Form held on 24/08.</i></p>

- To ensure the most vulnerable are provided with support to maintain a home and to integrate into the community

Ref.	Action	Target date	RAG Status	Progress
A012	To adhere to the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (VAWDASV)	High		<p>Progress has been adversely affected due to Covid however regular meetings with Atal Y Fro, Social Services and the Council’s Supporting People and Housing Solutions Team have taken place since April 2020 to discuss the challenges, emerging themes and accommodation demands. The MARAC process has been amended, including shorter meetings introduced every Monday and Friday in addition to the fortnightly MARAC meeting. This is to help manage the number of serious DA cases referred and discussed at the fortnightly meeting. Ongoing regular multi-agency meetings continue which include the statutory and third sector organisations to review progress on delivering the regional strategy.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: Whilst progress was initially affected by the pandemic work and interaction with service providers and relevant agencies have ensured that services users continue to be supported appropriately. The twice weekly MARAC discussions have proved very effective and more responsive to people who have experienced or who are in danger of experiencing domestic abuse and these will continue. Furthermore, the Vale’s Domestic Abuse support services are due to be recommissioned for 01/07/21. The new Service Specification will ensure that the new duties under the VAWDASV Act are embedded into the future contract.</p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: Engagement and adherence to the VAWDASV Act continues through regular close working relationship. The HSG funded services have recently been recommissioned jointly with the Community Safety Team and Police and Crime Commissioners Office.</i></p>
A013	Review of supported accommodation services	High		Reviews remains on track for domestic abuse, mental health and young person’s accommodation services to be recommissioned as required in April 2021.

				<p><i>2019/20 Update: Consultation event held in June. Reviews of individual projects underway and ongoing in accordance with the Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance. As a result of the review and legislation emphasis will be to review domestic abuse and mental health provisions. All other support contracts will continue to be reviewed in accordance with Supporting People programme guidance.</i></p> <p><i>Feb 2021 Update – New tenders for Young Person’s services and Mental Health services were completed w/c 08/02/21 and are currently at the approval stage. The new service specification for domestic abuse is currently being drafted with the new contract due to commence on 01/07/21.</i></p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: All HSG funded services are reviewed in line with the Supporting People Review Schedule, ensuring services are delivering in line with the contracts. This also enables us to identify gaps in services. During June and July 2021 10 contracts were recommissioned including domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse, family support and generic floating support.</i></p>
A014	Develop strategy for non- engagement within Supporting People Projects.	High		<p>Progress delayed due to Covid, however will be completed ahead of recommissioning of the supported accommodation services (A013).</p> <p><i>2019/20 Update: Initial meetings have taken place with Supporting People providers including Pobl and Llamau. Information gathered following meetings and draft report underway to inform new policy.</i></p> <p><i>Feb 2021: Progress has been delayed due to Covid as many methods of engagement are not currently available to support providers in the present ways of working. However, support workers are trialing several new ways of engaging clients remotely which will form part of the non-engagement strategy.</i></p>

A015	Analyse the support needs of clients in Temporary Accommodation	High		<p>This work continues and is concentrated on the many single households currently occupying the B&B units the Council procured as a result of the Covid demands. In addition, work is being recommenced to ensure that clients sharing temporary accommodation are managed by the same support provider.</p> <p>2019/20 Update: Initial discussions held between Supporting People Coordinator & Housing Solutions Manager to consider introduction of a new support initiative where residents within shared temporary accommodation receive support from the same provider to improve consistency and communication. Housing Related Support (HRS) form to be completed with all temporarily accommodated households.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: The support needs of all clients placed in temporary accommodation were analysed as part of the annual Supporting People data collection in June 2020, and will continue to form part of the Housing Support Grant needs mapping annually to ensure that support is targeted at the people requiring it the most.</p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: The needs of clients in Temporary Accommodation will form a significant part of the needs mapping for the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy which is due for completion in December 2021 and adoption in April 2022.</i></p>
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A016	Explore the need for a 24hr supported accommodation service for clients with mental health issues.	Medium		<p>24 hr complex needs project discussions have continued to progress with a potential local property being identified. Meetings have also been arranged in October to meet with the registered social landlords who expressed their interest in leasing and managing the proposed scheme. Currently also consulting with Members for their support with the scheme.</p> <p>2019/20 Update: Initial revenue costings received from current support provider in order to commence assessment of viability. Action to be included within Review of Supported Accommodation Action.</p> <p><i>Feb 2021 Update: Revenue funding has been secured through the additional HSG funding for 2021/2022. Options for capital funding are currently being explored. Options to turn the existing provision into 24-hour support have been explored but are not feasible in the accommodation currently in place due to lack of space for staff to sleep.</i></p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: New accommodation opportunity has now identified, and the Council is currently liaising with the landlord to develop this into the 24 hr complex needs resource</i></p>
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A017	Explore the feasibility of dedicated Support workers for all temporary accommodation households	Medium		<p>This work will now form part of the temporary accommodation analysis action (A015) following the identification of support needs.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: Agreement has been reached that all households placed in temporary accommodation will be referred for support through the Supporting People Team. Models to provide a dedicated support provider to each shared TA house have been explored but are not currently feasible due to the need to end support with current providers, leading to potential break downs in supportive relationships and non-engagement from clients.</p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: All households placed in temporary accommodation are referred for support at the time they are placed. Additional support sessions are provided weekly at the airport hotels in order to give people the opportunity to engage with support in different ways.</i></p>
A022	To support the recommendations from the LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness in Wales report 'Out on The Streets	High		<p>Meeting being arranged to meet with Stonewall to ensure the service is fully compliant with the recommendations of the report.</p> <p><i>Feb 2021 Update: In addition to Housing Services appointing a LGBTQ+ champion, Stonewall Cymru have now also provided a number of training and awareness sessions to 66 members of front-line staff and senior management staff across Housing and Building Services.</i></p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: Appropriate awareness literature and posters being sourced. The Council's LGBTQ+ Champion has also attended a more in-depth training event and learning from this has been shared with the Housing Service.</i></p>

<p>COVID 001</p>	<p>Fully explore all Housing and Support initiatives to help alleviate the significant temporary accommodation pressures on the Council</p>	<p>High</p>		<p>A number of initiatives are currently being explored to increase the temporary and permanent accommodation resources across the Vale of Glamorgan and neighbouring authorities to manage the significant pressures on the services due to Covid, particularly for single households. Intensive support opportunities are also currently being discussed for households in temporary accommodation or who are being threatened with homelessness to ensure they have the appropriate assistance and guidance to save or sustain a tenancy.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: New supported temporary accommodation initiatives continue to be developed as indicated above with the introduction of 11 new units through MMC (modern methods of construction) and 13 units of 24 hr complex needs supported accommodation. Both these initiatives are funded partially from the WG phase 2 homelessness recovery fund. 10 hours of additional support has also been made available for Saturdays enabling support to be provided which is more flexible and targeted.</p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: Significant work continues to help alleviate the pressures exacerbated by the pandemic which include exploring available commercial accommodation for development to provide alternative permanent and temporary housing solutions. These initiatives including the challenges being experienced have also been reported to the Homelessness Tasks & Finish group specifically set up to support the service in identification solutions and supporting initiatives.</i></p>
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COVID 002	Consider removing age restrictions on currently age designated Local Authority housing stock	High		<p>Early discussions continue to look at removing the over 40 age stipulation for certain identified blocks of 1-bedroom local authority owned stock to increase the housing options available for the significant and increasing number of single under 35-year-old households placed in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: Discussions continue internally to consider the need for re-designation of identified Council housing stock currently restricted to those aged over 40.</p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: Remains under discussions and has also been discussed formerly with the Homelessness Task & Finish group for consideration.</i></p>
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- **To improve the support offered to private landlords to improve tenancy sustainability.**


Ref.	Action	Target date	RAG Status	Progress
A018	Further develop working relationships and initiatives to expand the opportunities within the Private Rented Sector (PRS)	High		A private sector landlord survey is to be developed with the Council's Communications Team. This will later inform a publicity initiative to attract private landlords and increase the housing options for households presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The initiative will also help support sustainable tenancy management and alternative options for landlords who may have issued notices to their tenants.

				<p>2019/20 Update: Quarterly Landlord Forum meetings arranged for the next 12 months. Most recent Forum was attended by over 55 landlords. New forum structure developed in discussions with landlords and will now involve additional time for networking. Welsh Government have also acknowledged the Housing Solutions initiatives within the private rented sector and are visiting the Service on 30th Jan to further explore these and learn from what we are delivering.</p> <p>Feb 2021 Update: The Vale of Glamorgan chaired the Jan '21 PRS forum for local authority officers across Wales which included WG representation and contained presentations on the full range of support that the Service provides to private landlords. The Vale's private rented landlord offer has also been revised and now displayed on Rent Smart Wales website to encourage new landlords to work with the Vale Housing Solutions Service. A presentation was also given to Job Center Plus staff on 24 Feb 2021 detailing the support available to the PRS and solutions available for households in housing need. In Mar '21 the Vale ran its first virtual landlord forum. Social media opportunities are being explored and a private rented landlord questionnaire is being developed to further maximise the opportunities for this tenure of housing.</p> <p><i>Sept 2021 Update: Significant work continues in this sector of housing which includes a survey that is currently in circulation requesting input from landlords to help develop and expand the sector. The Private Rented Procurement Officer also now chairs the national landlord forum which is fundamental to staying well informed of the initiative and solutions to challenges experienced by fellow Local Authority colleagues.</i></p>
A031	Explore the need for targeted mother & baby support services/accommodation	Medium		<p>Sept 2021 Update: Initial discussion held with private rented sector landlord who is keen to identify and develop a suitable property in support of this action. Statistical information currently gathered to establish the size and type of property of properties required.</p>

- **Completed Strategy Actions**

A004	Formulate a demand led training and induction programme for front line staff.	High		Induction tool now developed and being delivered to the newest members of the team in February. Shelter Cymru reviewed before final sign-off of the tool.
A006	Analyse the current equality monitoring data being captured	Medium		Annual data collated and submitted to Equalities Team Currently capturing data for 19/20
A008	Examine Scottish Legislation to support potential amendments to current Welsh Legislation	Medium		Progress delayed due to Covid since desktop analysis of the Scottish Legislation completed. However new WG guidance has removed the Priority Need test deeming all who present as homeless to be considered vulnerable. Information requested from WG on how long this guidance is to be in place given the significant demands this is placing on temporary accommodation and the increasing number of clients being placed in b&b accommodation.in B&B).
A019	Develop and implement a Supporting People Gateway to create a single point of access to all housing related support services	High		Completed. Gateway now exists for all support services funded by the Supporting People Programme with a clear referral and monitoring framework in place.
A020	Request that the Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) for Supporting People co-opt a representative from each of the homelessness services in the Vale of Cardiff onto the Committee	Low		Completed. Request declined by RCC as Local Authority representatives from Housing already on RCC and able to update homelessness staff.

A021	Continue our work with partners to provide appropriate accommodation and support services for particular vulnerable groups	High		This work continues in accordance with Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Supporting People Programme Guidance (for support services) in line with resources and demands. Action to continue throughout strategy
A023	Develop a dedicated Support service for the private rented sector	High		Complete. Two new dedicated officers commissioned through the Supporting People Programme introduced specifically to increase the support available to private rented sector (PRS) landlords in addition to the support available for PRS tenants. Welsh Government also very interested in this initiative which formed part of the discussions during their visit on 30 th Jan 2020.
A024	Develop Youth Homelessness & Early Homelessness Prevention/Intervention services	High		Completed. Funding bid successful to develop the Emphasis project that delivers homelessness prevention advice in secondary schools across the Vale of Glamorgan. The Youth Service has funded a part time post to expand and deliver services to young people in partnership with all Vale of Glamorgan Secondary Schools.
A025	Develop a standard service 'promise' to demonstrate commitment to the client	High		Completed. The 'Promise' is a two-way agreement signed by both the case worker and client which sets out the appropriate standards of behaviour and respect expected by each party.
A026	Ensure service delivery and customer engagement complies with Welsh Language standards	High		Completed. All staff are encouraged to learn Welsh and allowed time to attend courses. All public documents/forms have been translated and are available in Welsh on request. All currently used documents have been translated in accordance with the legislation
A027	Promote and provide opportunities for staff to access Welsh language courses.	Medium		All staff are encouraged to learn Welsh and allowed time to attend courses. Completed with existing staff
A028	Develop close working relationships with DWP and Vale wide Job Centre's	High		Completed. Close working relationships have now been forged with DWP and quarterly update meetings held and embedded in the procedures.
	Review & Improve the quality and range of information provided by the Housing Solutions team e.g. web site links, contact details of external organisations.	High		Completed. New documents developed to assist clients online. Information also provided on the Council's website on services available from partner agencies and 'drop in' support services across the Vale. This information will continue to be reviewed and kept up to date.

A029	Improve the quality and range of information provided by the Housing Solutions Service on the Council's website.	High		Complete. Website now updated and current.
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A030	Residents are aware of the drop-in support services that are available throughout the Vale	High		Complete, Leaflets produced and disseminated at events and available at key public venues across the Vale of Glamorgan. Information also available via Council's web pages and the Council's Supporting People inbox on auto reply.
A031	Continue to strengthen relationships with RSL's	High		Complete, Homes4U Steering Group now meets quarterly. Quarterly meetings also arranged for front line Homes4U officers. These meetings continue and are ongoing.