Welsh Government Version

Monmouthshire County Council

Housing & Communities

Rapid Rehousing
Transition Plan
April 2022-March 2027

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1. Section 1 - Introduction/Context/Vision

1.1. Introduction:

The context for the development of this Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan relates to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Spring of 2020 and Welsh Government's request, for public health reasons, to all Welsh Local Authorities to support rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping into safe and temporary accommodation.

Welsh Government subsequently issued Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing related Support, which recognised that the emergency response to the pandemic provided an 'opportunity to harness the creativity, innovation, collaboration and willingness to work differently to make a long term, sustainable and fundamental change to homelessness services in Wales.'

The Phase 2 Guidance both sets out Welsh Governments vision for homelessness in Wales to be *'rare, brief and unrepeated'* and requiring local authorities in Wales to transform the approach to homelessness provision. Welsh Governments vision is underpinned by homeless prevention as the 'first and guiding principle.' At the core of Welsh Government proposals is the adoption of Rapid Rehousing. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, the focus needs to be on providing appropriate, stable housing and support as quickly as possible to those who need it through a range of models, reducing the dependency on emergency housing.

To inform this Plan the Council has utilised Welsh Government Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners, October 2021.

Rapid Rehousing is about taking a housing led approach to rehousing people that are experiencing homelessness, making sure they reach settled housing as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long. Over the next five years Welsh Government expect to see removal of prolonged and potentially damaging spells in temporary accommodation and the development of a systematic and strategic process that links housing development, support and supply to housing need. Doing so will enable allocation processes and PRS access points that focus on getting households experiencing homelessness into appropriate settled homes and target support to meet their needs.

Prevention remains the most efficient way of tackling homelessness and must remain a key priority, but where homelessness cannot be prevented, Welsh Government require:

- Systematic planning to make settled accommodation available.
- Move into settled accommodation at the same time as, rather than after, addressing support needs.
- An improvement in the quality and a reduction in the need for temporary accommodation.
- Offering a package of assistance and multi-agency support, specially tailored to individual needs where this is required.

Rapid Rehousing should be flexible and recognise that people who present as homeless may have different levels of need. It is about acknowledging that without access to adequate housing, individuals may experience multiple adverse effects including: exposure to disease, poverty, isolation, mental health issues, prejudice and discrimination, and are under constant and significant threat to their personal safety

The Council welcomes and is committed to Welsh Governments desire to transform homelessness provision and since 2020 has been working to respond and support Welsh Governments vision and to transform service provision in Monmouthshire.

In protecting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping by bringing those people into emergency accommodation and continuing to support them, the Council has experienced both a significant increase in the need and demand for temporary accommodation[1] together with a change in the profile of those being accommodated in terms of need and demographic.

The main implications of this short-term change in need for homeless accommodation have been:

- A large proportion of those needing temporary accommodation has been from single males[2].
- Those being accommodated typically have had support needs. At April 2022, 73% had medium support needs or higher.
- A significant expansion in the use of B & B accommodation both in terms of the number of units required[3] and also the length of time people were needing to occupy B & B accommodation.
- The need to ensure staffing structures and capacity were appropriate to adequately manage the change in demand and transform the service.
- The need to quickly remodel housing support provision to ensure that those accommodated were adequately supported.
- The resource implications relating to the need to increase Housing Support capacity and provision.

Key objectives, therefore, of the Council of this period of transition are:

- Homelessness cannot be regarded as a Housing only issue. Partnership working and shared responsibility is key as Rapid Rehousing cannot be achieved through housing services alone and will require the support and co-operation of wider public and third sector services.
- To reduce the numbers of people coming through needing temporary accommodation, whilst also minimising the time spent in temporary accommodation for those that need it.
- To address the reliance on unsustainable reliance on B & B accommodation;
- To increase the availability of temporary, supported and permanent housing for homelessness
- To increase the capacity of both housing support and wider support.
- To prioritise young people, mental health and substance misuse and staffing.

1.2. Vision

The agreed vision for Rapid Rehousing in Monmouthshire is:

Connected partnerships prevent homelessness and if not possible,
time in temporary accommodation is brief,
facilitating well-being.

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[1] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.2
[2] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.2
[3] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.2

The ambition of the Monmouthshire Rapid Re-Housing Steering Group is:

- To have a proactive and responsive 'whole-system' of services and agencies providing homeless services in Monmouthshire that are well connected and collectively focused on supporting, sustaining, increasing accommodation supply and speeding up access to settled accommodation.
- That there is no 'wrong door' for anyone homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Wherever possible, people are supported to remain in their existing accommodation and homeless is prevented, whilst recognising there is a need for earlier intervention to be facilitated by seeking to go 'further upstream.'
- Whilst acknowledging that in some cases homelessness cannot be avoided and there will always be some form of temporary accommodation needed. This accommodation though needs to be good quality and regarded as a home, albeit temporary.
- The outcome of the provision of connected and co-ordinated homeless services is positive health and well-being of service users who are able to and are supported re-build their lives. The Gwent PSB have agreed that Gwent should become a Marmot Region and, therefore, the six Marmot principles should be the framework to reduce health inequalities across Gwent. Rapid Rehousing contributes towards the said six Marmot principles:

  o Giving every child the best start in life;
  o Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives;
  o Creating fair employment and good work for all;
  o Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all;
  o Creating and developing sustainable places and communities;
  o Strengthening the role of ill-health-prevention.

To achieve this vision the focus of this Plan will be to address the following priorities, which are intended to align and be consistent with the Council's Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022.

- **Priority 1 - Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunit**y

- **Priority 2 - Increase the <u>supply</u> of affordable and <u>settled</u> accommodation**

- **Priority 3 - Provide timely and effective <u>support</u> to <u>sustain</u> accommodation**

- **Priority 4 - Maximising resources and benefits through well connected partnerships**

1.3. Governance

A multi-agency partnership board, the Strategic Rapid Rehousing Steering Group has been established to both develop this Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and to oversee its ongoing implementation.

The Steering Group is made of the following services and agencies:

- Monmouthshire County Council – Housing & Communities; Planning; Social Care – Adults and Children; Housing Support Grant and Estates
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board

- A Housing Support Provider representative (at the time or writing, Llamau on behalf of other Monmouthshire providers
- A Registered Social Landlord representative (at the time of writing Monmouthshire Housing on behalf of Melin and Pobl).
- Regional Public Services Board representative

The Group will report into the Council's People Scrutiny Committee, whilst also being accountable to the Place Scrutiny Committee and Public Service Scrutiny Committees.

Group membership includes a representative of both the Gwent Public Services Board, Regional Partnership Board and the Gwent Health, Social Care and Housing Strategic Partnership, via the Monmouthshire Programme Board, which is the official Strategic Local Delivery group (LDG) for the County of Monmouthshire under the Gwent Public Services Board. **See Figure 1.** The Rapid Rehousing Steering Group will have the ability, by exception, to escalate any areas of barriers, challenge or opportunities, that require wider partner involvement, to the Monmouthshire Programme Board for assistance, steer, or escalation to the Gwent PSB or RPB where necessary.
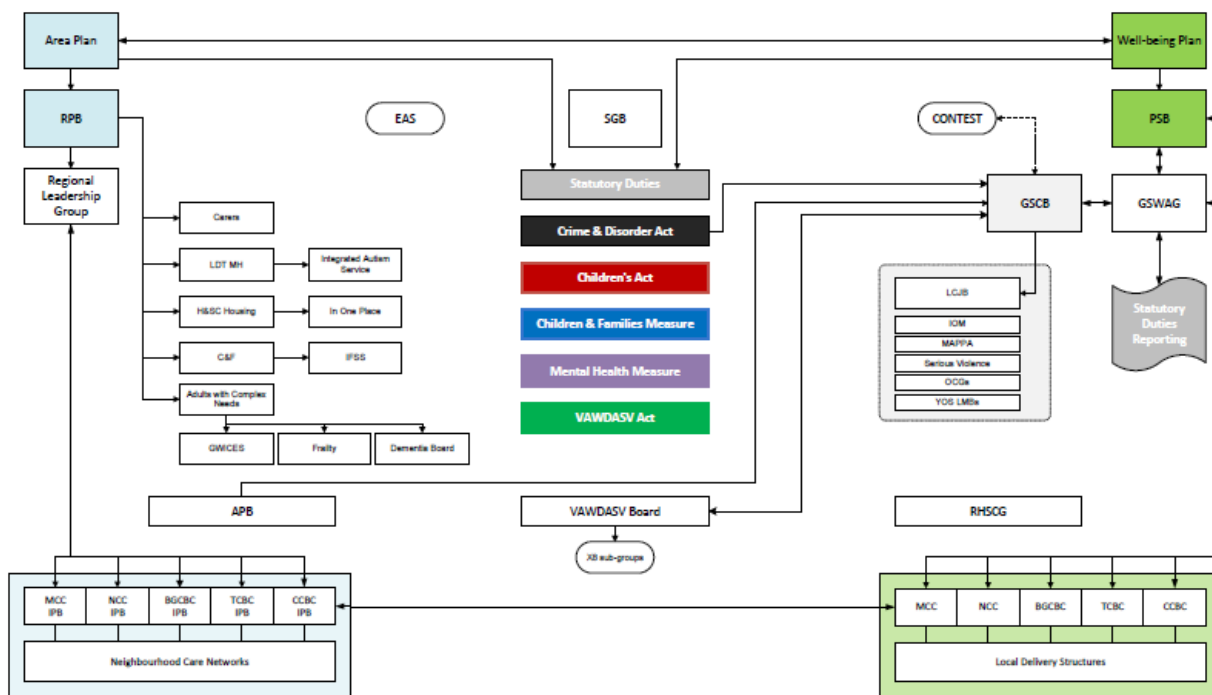
Figure 1:Gwent Partnership Landscape; Gwent PSB and RPB and LDGs

Whilst not structurally aligned or any governance arrangements, the Rapid Re-Housing Steering Group is intrinsically linked to a joint Strategic Housing Forum between the Council, Monmouthshire Housing, Melin and Pobl Housing Associations. The Forum has been established as part of the Council's response to homelessness to specifically identify collective and innovative solutions to tackle the unsustainable reliance on B & B by increasing the delivery of affordable housing in Monmouthshire and to maximise the use of capital funding, particularly Social Housing Grant.

In addition, Rapid Rehousing is a regular consideration of the Monmouthshire Homesearch, Common Housing Register partnership again due to the intrinsic link with permanent social housing accommodation.

1.4. Engagement

The engagement and involvement of both internal services and external agencies has been a priority to develop this plan. The Council has consulted widely with partners and stakeholders. It, however, hasn't been possible to capture the views of users of homeless services in Monmouthshire, but is an action of this Plan and to build upon the service user feedback captured to inform the development of the Council's Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022.

The development of the plan has been co-ordinated by an internal working group made up of both Housing & Communities and Housing Support Grant staff. This joint co-ordination recognises that homelessness and housing support functions are equally of relevance in terms of homelessness, and the development of this plan and delivery of rapid rehousing.

The internal working group undertook the following engagement to develop this plan:

- A multi-agency meeting during May 2022 to introduce and explain Rapid Re-Housing. This meeting agreed in principal to establish a Steering Group, to undertake a service mapping exercise and that individual services and agencies should sign up to a written pledge of commitment agreements, as per practice identified in Scotland.

- A multi-agency meeting during June 2022 jointly developed the Plan's vision and priorities, agreed the formation of the Steering Group and its membership.

- A service mapping exercise has been implemented.

- Three multi-agency themed sub-groups have been held to consider Homeless Prevention; Support and Accommodation. The sub-group discussions helped to inform the Action Plan and responsibility for respective actions. The remit of each sub-group was:

  - **Homeless Prevention**
  - What homeless prevention services that you provide works well and can/should be built upon?
  - What homeless prevention activity that your agency provides (or another service) doesn't work so well and why?
  - What more can your agency (or other agency) do to keep people in their current homes?
  - How can your service help to facilitate early homeless intervention?
  - What 'early warning' triggers can be identified?

  - **Support**
  - What support activity works well and why, that can/should be built upon? How can your agency help?
  - Including facilitating homeless prevention and early intervention;
  - Helping people to remain and sustain their existing accommodation;
  - Help people to identify alternative accommodation
  - Helping people prepare for a move **quickly** to a settled home;
  - What support activity doesn't exist or doesn't work so well? How can your agency help?
  - How can support and your agency help people to move on more quickly from temporary accommodation

- o **Accommodation**
- o Do you agree with the barriers to expanding affordable housing across Monmouthshire?
- o What further barriers can you identify
- o Thinking of the sphere of influence and control, which barriers can we, or could potentially, work together to overcome
- o How do we collectively use our influence and control? Which barriers can we, or could we potentially, work together to overcome?
- o How do we collectively use our influence and control to increase housing supply (all types) and reduce our use of B&B accommodation in the short, medium and long-term.

- The partnership activity has been supplemented with a number of one to one meetings with individual services or partner agencies.

- It was also the intention to undertake a service user exercise to also inform the Plan. Unfortunately this wasn't possible, but has been included as an action for this Plan.

- All agencies who have agreed to contribute to this plan have agreed in principle to sign up to a pledge of commitment, detailing the responsibility and actions they respectfully have agreed to implement.

2. Section 2 – Homelessness Data and Analysing Need

2.1. Context

Monmouthshire is a predominantly rural county and is noted for its rich and diverse landscape. It covers an area of approximately 88,000 hectares and shares a border with the neighbouring counties of Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Powys in Wales and Gloucestershire and Herefordshire in England. The estimated population is 94,950 (Source: ONS, April 2020). The main towns in the County are Abergavenny, Monmouth, Chepstow and Caldicot.

Housing Market Areas

It is possible to split Monmouthshire into 3 distinct housing market areas (See figure 2) following the 2011 census travel to work areas as detailed in below:

- o Chepstow Housing Market Area (Newport Travel to Work Area);
- o Monmouth Housing Market Area (Cinderford and Ross-on-Wye Travel to Work Area);
- o Abergavenny Housing Market Area (Merthyr Tydfil Travel to Work Area)
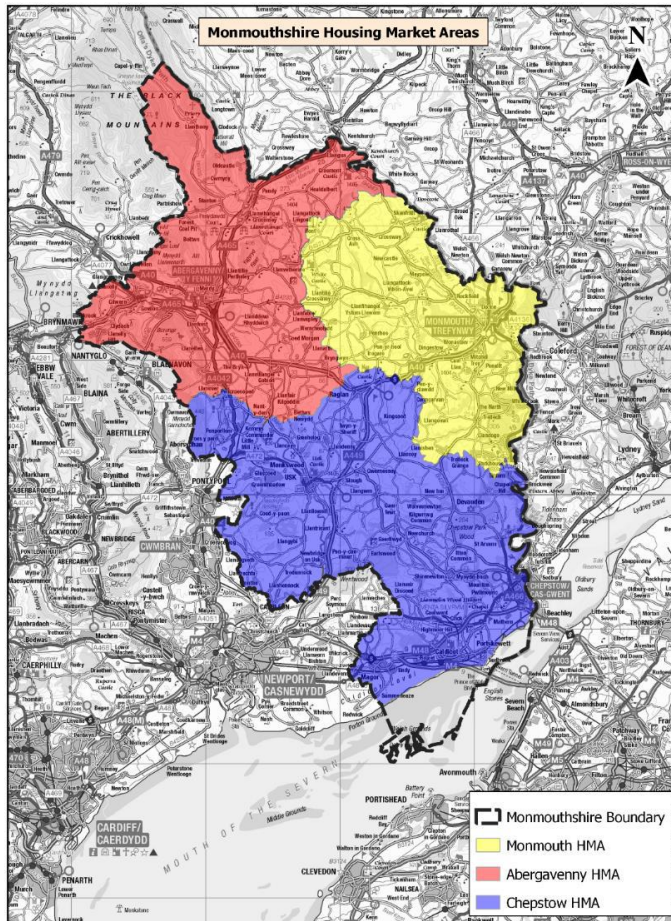
Geography & Technology, Welsh Government 057.20-21
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Figure 2 Monmouthshire Housing Market Areas Map

Population Breakdowns

A Demographic Evidence Report was prepared by Edge Analytics (November 2020) to inform Monmouthshire's Replacement Local Development Plan. An index of population growth for each of four broad age-groups (0–15, 16–64, 65+, 80+), reveals the important demographic changes that are taking place within Monmouthshire, ageing its population over time. **See Figure 2.**
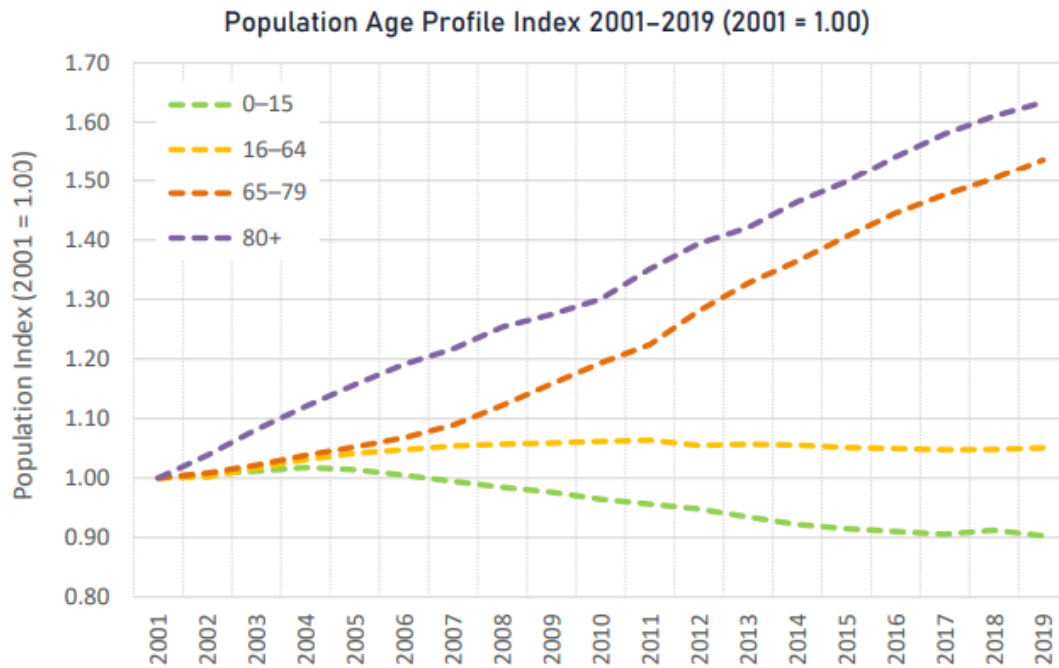
Figure 3: Population Age Profile Index, 2001-2019

Since 2001, the 65–79 and 80+ age-groups have increased in size by 54% and 63% respectively. In contrast, the 0–15 age-group is 10% smaller than its 2001 total. The size of the 16–64 age-group, the student and labour force age-group, has remained relatively stable since 2006, approximately 5–6% higher than in 2001.

Income and Earnings

Monmouthshire has a relatively high average household income, the median income for 2022 is £40,024 (CACI Paycheck) which is the highest across the Southeast region of Wales. **See Figure 3.**
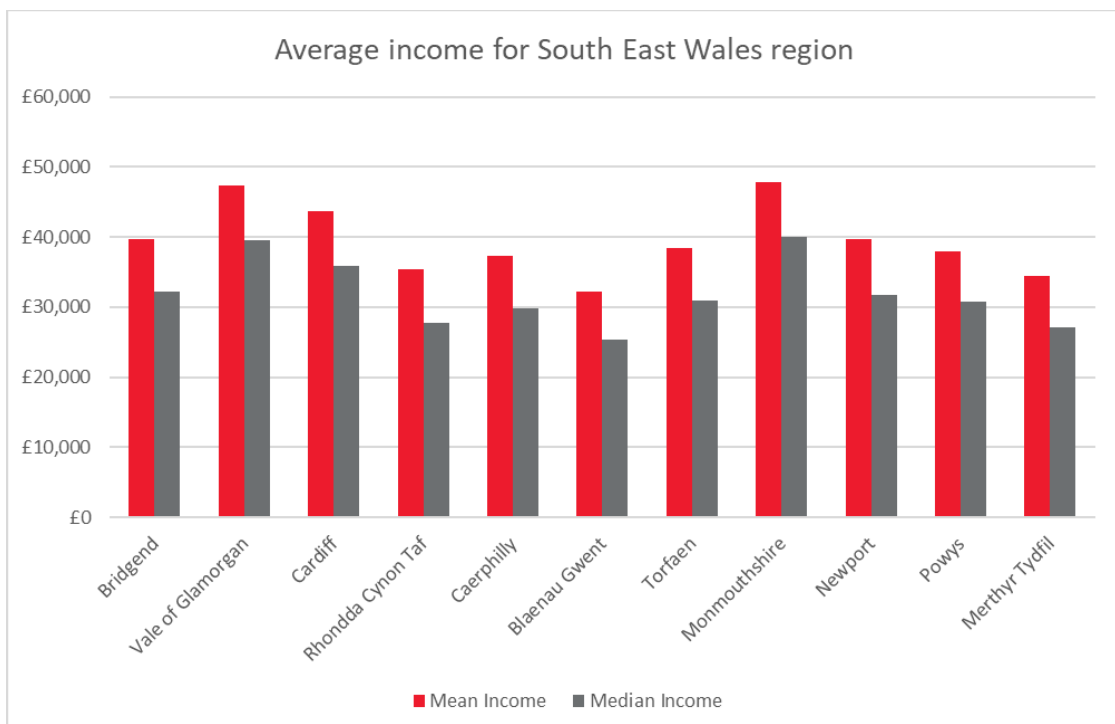
Figure 4: Average Income for SE Wales

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Monmouthshire Housing Market

Data obtained from Hometrack (January, 2022) shows that current average price of a home in Monmouthshire is £352,233, based on sales and valuations up to November 2021, This is substantially higher than the average for Wales which currently stands at £228,209 for the same period (Hometrack, January 2022).

In terms of affordability, the house price to income ratio for Monmouthshire is 8:1 but levels vary across the county, the rural north between Abergavenny and Monmouth has the highest ratio at 11.6:1 (Hometrack, January 2022). This is contributing to the County's imbalanced demography, which is seeing a concerning reduction in under 60s age groups and if left unchecked would result in a shrinking economically active workforce and socially imbalanced communities.

Private rent sector

As of February 2022, there were 2,765 landlords registered with Rent Smart Wales representing 4,797 properties throughout Monmouthshire. The LHMA summarises the findings from a desk top study carried out in July 2020 of the residential rental market. Although data on private rental information is not as reliable or robust due to a lack of data currently available, the study indicated that the rental market contracted by almost 50% between 2010-2019 (illustrated in Figure 2) and that only 5.75% of private rented properties came within the corresponding Local Housing Allowance rate. This shows that the private rental market is highly unlikely to be a viable option for those in receipt of local housing allowance.

Affordable Housing Stock

Monmouthshire Housing Association, Melin Homes and Pobl own and manage the majority of affordable housing stock. There are around 5700 units of affordable housing across Monmouthshire (LHMA, 2020) as detailed below.

Table 1 below provides a breakdown of tenure according to the 2011 Census. It shows that homeownership (with or without a mortgage and shared ownership) is the most popular form of tenure, with 74% of Monmouthshire residents, either fully or in part, owning their own home. **Table 2 and 3** provides respective breakdown of social housing stock.

Table 1:Breakdown of Tenure

Tenure	Number	Breakdown
Owned Outright	15,268	39.9%
Owned with a Mortgage or Loan	12,872	33.7%
Shared Ownership (part owned part rented)	141	0.4%
Social Rented	5,288	13.8%
Private Rented	4,130	10.8%
Living Rent Free	532	1.4%
Total	38,233	100%

Table 2: Existing Housing Stock – General Needs

Housing Market Area	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	6 bed	8 bed	Total
Abergavenny	354	463	621	59	2	0	0	1,499
Chepstow	536	788	861	69	1	1	0	2,256
Monmouth	158	257	322	17	0	0	1	755
Total	1,048	1,508	1,804	145	3	1	1	4,510

Table 3: Existing Housing Stock – Older Person's Housing

Housing Market Area	Bedsit	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total
Abergavenny	20	289	148	9	0	466
Chepstow	0	322	156	2	1	481
Monmouth	0	208	54	2	0	264
Total	**20**	**819**	**358**	**13**	**1**	**1,211**

Social Housing Lettings

In 2021-2022 there were a total of 351 social housing lettings, with around 47% of Generals Needs lettings allocated to homeless households. The proportion of lettings to homeless households has risen over the past three years in line with the increased number of households, as shown in the table below:

Table 4: Social Housing Lettings and Allocations to Homeless Households

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total number of lettings	461	366	351
Proportion of General Needs properties allocated to homeless households	20%	39%	47%

Although this increasing trend of more social housing being allocated to homeless households is positive, it is still insufficient in respect of existing demand.

2.2. Presentations

2.2.1. Homeless Presentations
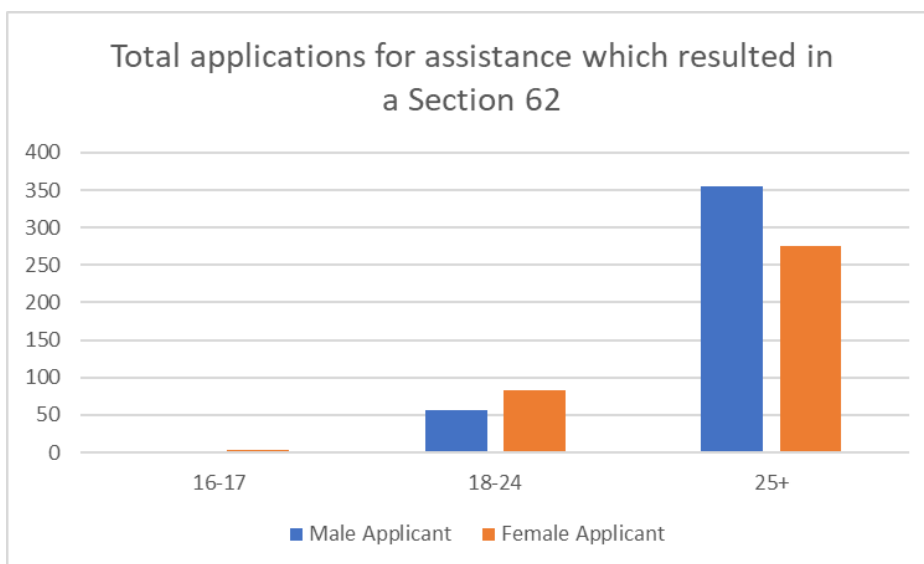
Figure 5: Homeless Applications Resulting in a Section 62 Duty

The above breaks down the homeless presentations for 2021/22 into gender and age. There were a total of 773 applications, with males only slightly more represented at 53.3%. Of the 773 applications 139 were made by those under the age of 25, 97% of those were 18-24.

17.9% (138) of the 773 presentations were a repeat approach within the financial year. The 138 repeat presentations were made by 68 households with 2 households approaching 3 times within the year, the others approaching twice.

Though still not at the presentation levels of 2017/18, the last two years has seen a reversal in the previous declining trend as figures have been increasing since 2020-2021.
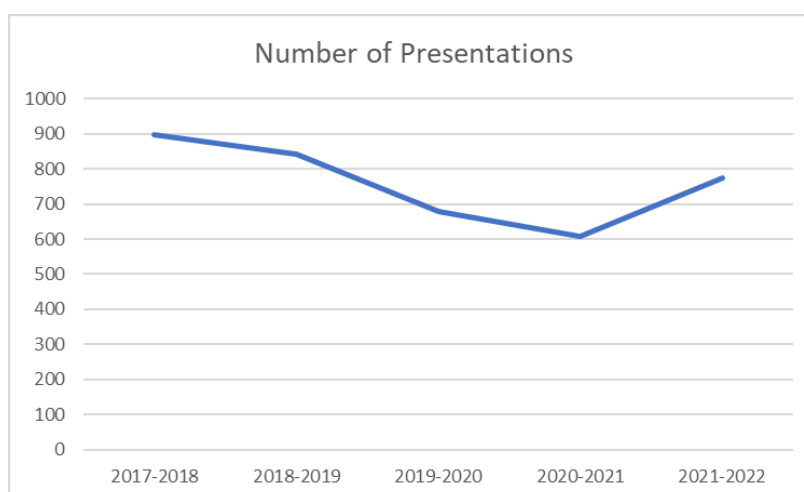
Figure 6: Homeless Presentations

Although the dip in 2020/21 may seem like a surprising figure given the 'Everyone In' policy adopted by the Welsh Government, this must also be considered in the context of eviction bans for a considerable period of time throughout the public health crisis.

A greater indication of the strain put on the Housing Options Team over the last two years is the proportion of these presentations which were awarded a housing duty over and above the initial Section 60, particularly at Section 73 where temporary accommodation is provided.

Year	Total Presen-tations	Number of presentations awarded each duty			No. of presen-tations receiving a duty	% of Presen-tations being owed a duty
		S66	S73	S75		
2017/18	897	255	228	32	515	57
2018/19	842	307	201	43	551	65
2019/20	680	187	239	17	443	65
2020/21	607	129	273	13	415	68
2021/22	773	133	402	77	612	79

At a first glance the proportion of those receiving a duty beyond a Section 60 seems surprisingly low. Monmouthshire has historically had a number of presentations who disappear- either through loss of contact or withdrawal- following an initial contact at Section 60. The reasons behind this would ideally be explored further but the very nature of these disappearances makes any follow up with the client incredibly difficult, if not impossible.

Despite recording the fewest presentations of the last 5 years, 2020-2021 saw the second highest number of Section 73s, and thus number of people in TA. Between 2017 and 2022 there was an increase in those being awarded a housing duty (above a Section 60) of over 20%. In 2021-2022 the number of cases awarded a Section 73 was double that seen in 2018-2019, and cases being owed a Section 75 is double that seen in 2017/18- the year with the highest overall presentations.
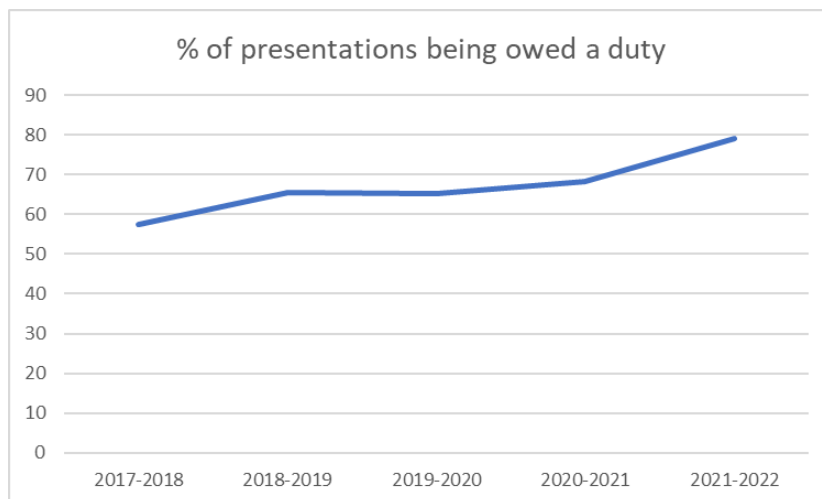
Figure 7: % of Presentations Owed a Homeless Duty

The significant increase in the % of cases being owed housing duties in excess of a Section 60 is a direct result of the suspension of priority need and intentionality under public health measures during the pandemic. The Housing Options Team have had to secure accommodation for a minimum of 174 households more in 2022 than in 2017. Minimum

because this does not include households who have lost duty and are still being accommodated under ongoing public health measures.
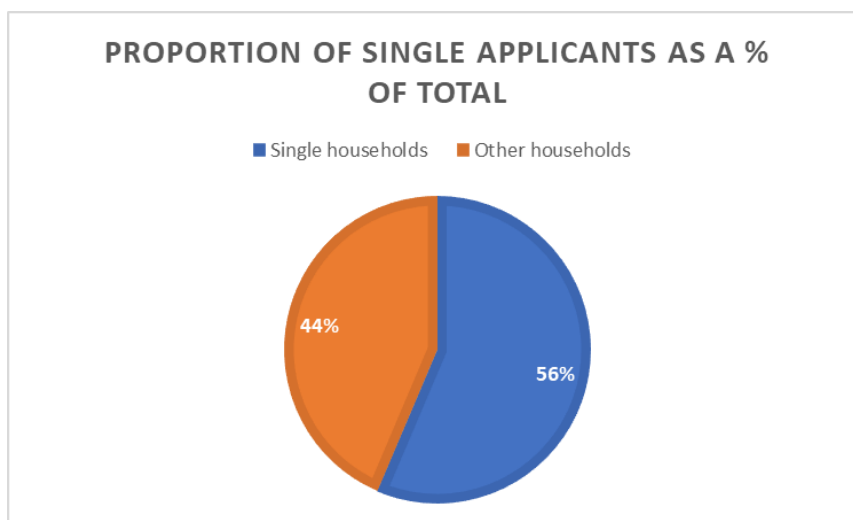
Figure 8: Proportion of Applications from Single People

Just over half of the applications in 2021/22 were made by single adults which supports the anecdotal experience of the Housing Options Team. A high proportion of these single applicants are male (approx. 69%). The Housing Options Team has seen a rapid increase in the numbers of single applicants approaching as homeless and being accommodated in TA since the introduction of the Public Health Measures brought in by Welsh Government at the beginning of the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic a significant number of these applicants would not have been considered 'Priority Need' and may have continued as the 'hidden homeless'. So, whilst 2021/22 has seen the lowest proportion of single presentations over the last 5 years, the proportion of those accommodated will be significantly higher. 2020/21 which saw the highest proportion of single applicants was similarly affected by the public health protocols and as a result Monmouthshire has seen a significant increase in single households in TA.

Table 6: % of Presentations by Single People

Single households	
Year	% of presentations
2017-2018	66%
2018-2019	63%
2019-2020	64%
2020-2021	69%
2021-2022	56%

Further interrogation of this data also reveals the reason behind homeless approaches for 759 of applicants to Monmouthshire Council Housing Options team. For the 2021/22 financial year loss of rented accommodation was by far the most occurrent motive, and this follows the trends of the past 5 years. However, the numbers are vastly higher in 2021/22 which supports the LMHA data of a declining Private Rented market, and the anecdotal evidence

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from Housing Options Officers of landlords issuing notice so as to sell a property following a ban on evictions 2020/21.

Table 7: Reason for loss of Accommodation 2021-2022 presentations

Reason for Loss of Accommodation	Count of Reason for homelessness
Breakdown of relationship with partner: Non violent	104
Breakdown of relationship with partner: Violent	76
Current property unaffordable	19
Current property unsuitable	42
In institution or care (e.g hospital, residential home, army etc.)	10
Loss of rented or tied accommodation	200
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home	10
Other (including homeless in emergency, returned from abroad, sleeping rough or in hostel)	40
Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	90
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	95
Prison leaver	27
Rent arrears on: private sector dwellings	16
Rent arrears on: Social sector dwellings	1
THG COVID	3
Violence or harassment which is: Due to another reason	26
Grand Total	**759**

Following the loss of Private Rented accommodation, the next 3 bases for a homeless application relates to relationship breakdowns in one form or another, again replicating the trends of the past 5 years. Most commonly this is a relationship breakdown (partner), but the number of those approaching following a parent, relative or friend no longer willing to accommodate is not insignificant.

Although not a reason for homelessness, THG Covid (Tenancy Hardship Grant) has been used by Housing Options officers to record and track the recipients of the 'Tenancy Hardship Grant' established to assist households who have fallen behind with rent due to Covid. The 3 cases recorded under this above were supported by Prevention Officers and successfully prevented through use of the THG.

2.2.2. Forecasts and Trends
Using data from 2017-2022 the following forecast can be made regarding the number of presentations and proportion of single applicants over the next 5 years. To mitigate against any fluctuations in data as a result of the pandemic, the average for 2020-2021 was based upon four non-concurrent months: May and October (2020) and February and June (2021).
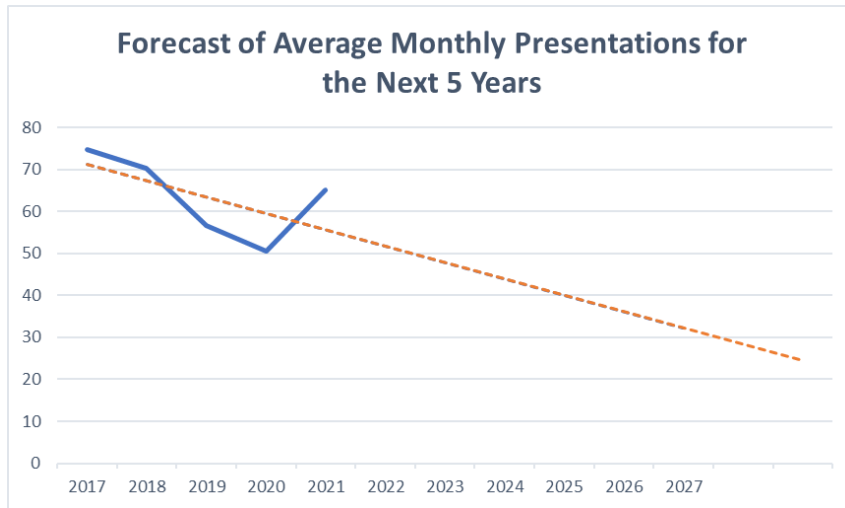
Figure 9: Forecast of average monthly presentations for the next 5 years

Despite the increase in presentations in 2021-2022 the forecast for the next 5 years continues to be a steady decline.
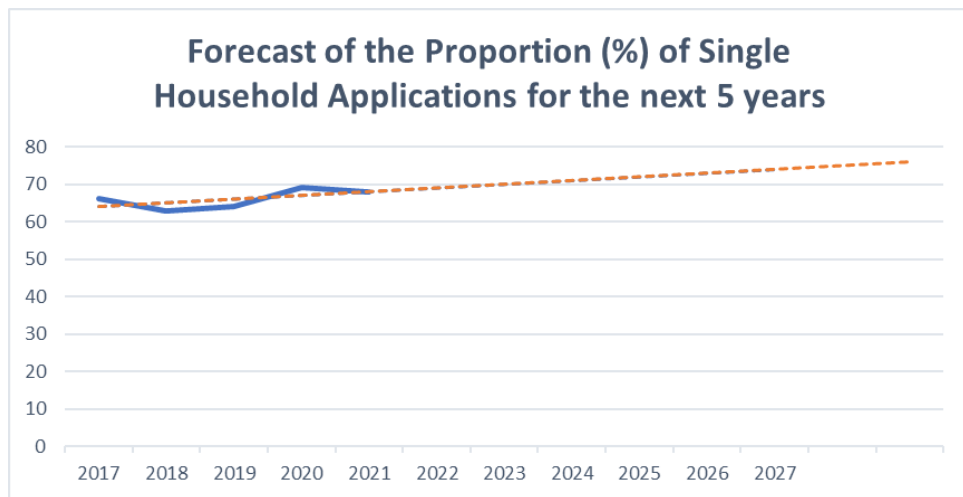
Figure 10: Forecast of the proportion of single applicants over the next 5 years.

Conversely the forecast for the % of single applicants remains high and continues to increase. This will be interesting to watch as anecdotal evidence would suggest that this may have peaked in 2020-2021 as options officers are reporting an increase in families approaching following the removal on eviction bans.

2.2.3. Outcomes

Just under half of those awarded a section 66 duty were discharged with successful outcomes, with those progressing onto a section 73 significantly more numerous than unsuccessful discharges.

Table 8: Outcomes by duty 2021-2022

Duty	Successful (%)	Unsuccessful (%)	Neutral (Progression to next duty) (%)
66	49.62	11.28	39.10

73	27.11	21.14	51.74
75	50.65	49.35	0

Definitive outcomes for those in receipt of a section 73 is much lower than for sections 66 or 75, with the majority progressing to a section 75. This is likely impacted by the fact that those on a section 73 will be placed in temporary accommodation and thus prevention work to remain in the home becomes obsolete, reducing successful discharge options. There may also be less of an inclination at this stage to source PRS accommodation as a move into TA has not been avoided.

Discharges from Section 75 successful and unsuccessful outcomes are more evenly matched. That unsuccessful discharges make up just under half of all discharges is a concern but reflects the difficulty in trying to maintain higher needs clients in Temporary Accommodation for long durations. These cases have rapidly increased under Public Health measures.

Looking at the destination for successfully discharged cases by duty, placements into PRS and RSL properties look evenly distributed up until a section 75. As is expected, the preference of those awarded full housing duty under section 75 is almost always to be accommodated in social accommodation. Those relieved under section 66 remain consistent across tenure type, with those remaining in their own homes slightly ahead of those moving into PRS.
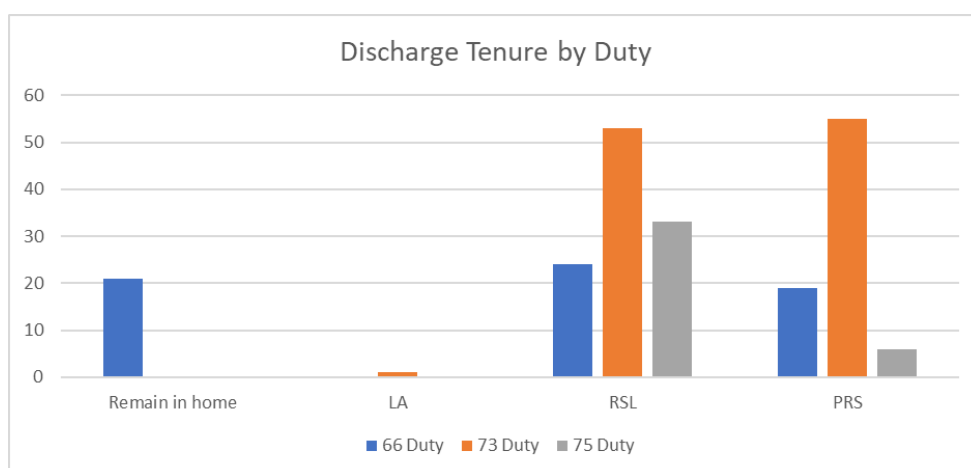
Figure 11: Discharge tenure by duty 2021-2022

Unlike the above, the following breakdown of negative outcomes includes 'neutral' ones, as these cases are ones which were not successfully prevented.

Table 9: Breakdown of Negative outcomes by duty 2021-2022

	Number of Cases			
Duty End Reason	S66	S73	S75	Total
Assistance Refused	1	1	0	2
Create homeless case and S73 task	51			51

Non cooperation	2	5	0	7
Other	2	6	0	8
Unsuccessful prevention 56 days passed NP	1	5	0	6
Application Withdrawn	3	23	7	33
Application Withdrawn due to loss of contact	9	36	0	45
Unsuccessful prevention create S75 task		216		216
Unsuccessfully Relieved	0	7	0	7
Became homeless intentionally from accommodation provided under section 75			16	16
Ceased to be eligible	0	0	1	1
Refusal of an offer of accommodation for social housing	0	0	1	1
Refusal of an offer of suitable accommodation under section 75			4	4
Voluntarily ceased to occupy accommodation made available under section 75			10	10
Total	**69**	**299**	**39**	**407**

As can be easily identified, the vast majority of negative outcomes relate to cases progressing through the duties, from 66 all the way to 75, indicating that prevention at these points was either unsuccessful or, increasingly, inappropriate. Aside from this, the most occurrent reason for a negative discharge was due to application withdrawal. Over half of the withdrawn applications were due to a loss of contact. When looking even further into these figures single male applicants are found to make up 52.6% of all those who either withdrew their application or had their application withdrawn due to loss of contact; 62.5% of those who became homeless intentionally from accommodation provided under section 75 and 80% of those who voluntarily ceased to occupy accommodation made available under section 75. This supports the theory that the Housing Options Team have processed more applications from complex and transient male applicants under the Public Health measures that would have otherwise been likely to receive a non-priority decision. As Monmouthshire's Housing Support Services are aimed at those with low-medium support needs it is possible that this cohort did not receive support appropriate for their needs to enable them to remain in temporary accommodation and to engage in the process.

The below table illustrates the average case length by duty and outcome across household, age and gender demographics. It would be logical to assume that the higher the duty, the longer the case length however as is shown those under a section 66 have unusually long durations. This can be accounted for in the context of extended notice periods following the pandemic. Households would approach the Housing Options Team with a notice and be owed a section 66, but they may be on that duty until their eviction up to 6 months later.

Table 10: Average case length in days broken down by positive and negative outcomes across Age and Gender

		AVG case length (days)	Household Type			Age Category						Gender	
			Single	Couple	Family	<25	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-54	55+	Male	Female
66	Positive	174	146	262	194	139	192	165	182	137	196	167	183
	Negative	111	104	60	113	56	78	179	140	49	86	141	90
73	Positive	150	144	112	175	169	173	124	135	182	129	124	174
	Negative	158	172	109	113	147	140	184	183	134	120	170	140
75	Positive	309	346	261	245	400	231	403	334	221	239	353	258
	Negative	243	251	212	175	296	245	228	209	299	195	238	269

Unlike the average length of stay in TA (below) this clearly indicates a saturation of single households in the housing market. Single households have a significantly longer case length on average at section 75 (both positive and negative outcomes) than families. This is an accurate representation of the length of time single households will wait before being discharged into settled accommodation. As a significant proportion of single households who approach are male the significant difference can be followed through to the gender breakdown of successful 75 decisions. Male applicants are on average likely to experience a shorter case length when issued with a negative S75 decision than females possibly due to a higher proportion of males presenting with higher needs who struggle to maintain TA.

When looking at the average case length by age the results are quite surprising. It is not clear at this moment in time why those under the age of 25, and those aged between 30-39 have such significantly longer case lengths and this will require further investigation.

2.2.4. Temporary Accommodation (TA)
The below table shows the average length of stay in TA (excluding supported accommodation) by household type, across positive and negative discharges in TA, and by spread (longest and shortest stays). Outside of other (those who have decided to apply as friends, those moving with elderly parents) it is unsurprising to see that single households remain in TA longer on average before moving on positively to settled accommodation.

Table 11: Average length of stay in TA across positive and negative discharges broken down by household type 2021-2022

	Average number of days	AVG number of days with Positive discharge	AVG number of days with Negative discharge		Longest Stay (days)	Shortest Stay (days)
Single	165.7	179.7	137.4		740	1

Couple	152.5	148.6	161.3		431	1
Family	149.9	167.4	34.3		482	0
Other	249.2	249.2			530	28

Although the trends are largely congruent to the experiences of the Housing team at Monmouthshire, it is felt that the figures do not show the true extent of throughput in Monmouthshire's TA. As Monmouthshire Housing department has not routinely collected data on TA use and stays this data has been collated manually and is subject to human error. Methods for more accurate data recording of TA use are currently being implemented and it is hoped that any future reports on TA use will more closely align with the experiences of the team.

2.2.5. Rough Sleeper Data
Monmouthshire Housing Options only started to formally record rough sleepers in the county from November 2021, and so there is only data for the last 5 months of the previous financial year.

Between November 2021 and April 2022 there were 21 unique rough sleepers recorded in the county. This figure is made up of those rough sleeping, sleeping in a tent, sleeping in a vehicle or abandoned building. The figure does not include those sleeping in caravans and this is important to note as there have been a small number of cases where clients have been residing in caravans that lack basic amenities.

Of the 21 rough sleepers between November 2021 and April 2022 14 were male, and 7 female.
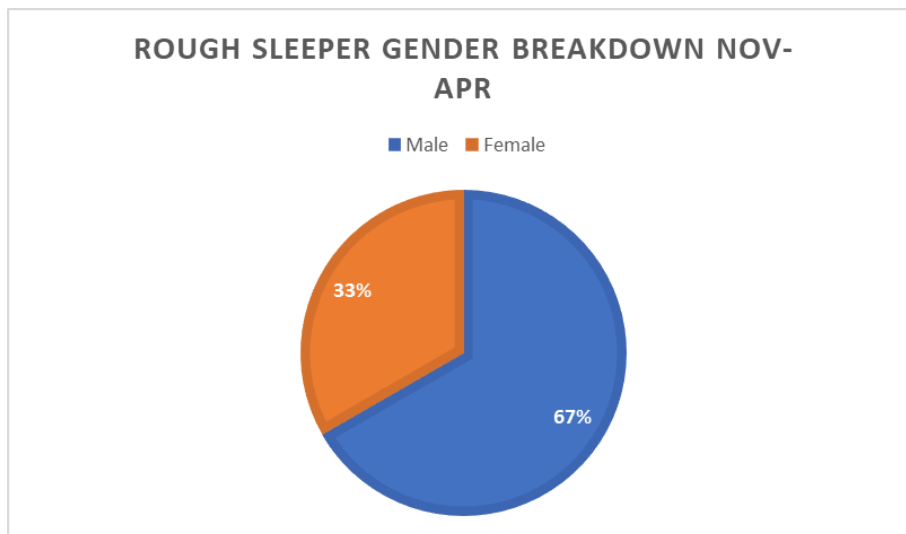
Figure 12: Gender breakdown of Rough Sleepers recorded Nov 21-April 22
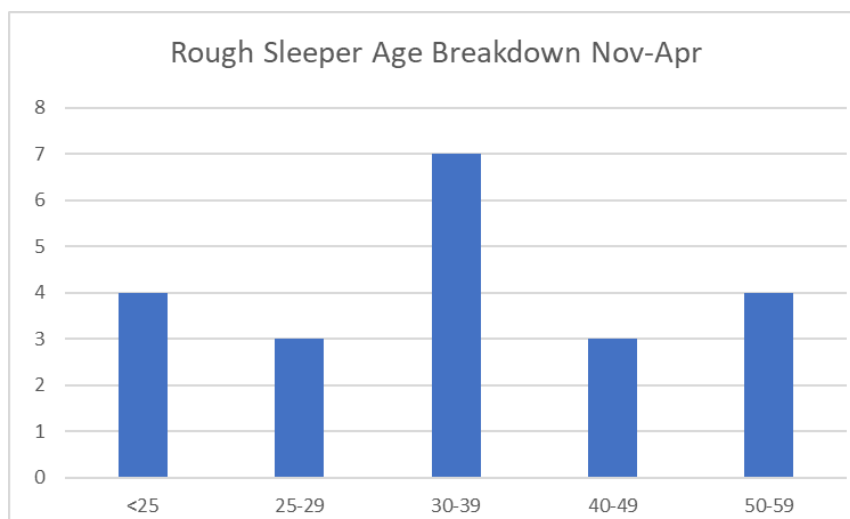
Figure 13: Age breakdown of Rough Sleepers recorded Nov 21- April 22

Two thirds of the rough sleepers during this period were aged below 40 (14), with those under 29 and those between the ages of 30 and 39 equally represented. The youngest rough sleeper was 19.

The outcomes of these rough sleepers are recorded below:

Table 12: Outcomes of Rough Sleepers recorded Nov 21- April 22

Outcome	Number of rough sleepers
Moved into B&B	2
Little/ No/ Unable to engage or contact	7
Moved out of area	1
Engaging with support	10
New referral	1

Just under half of the rough sleepers recorded engaged with support services, and 2 were placed in B&B during the 5 months. Anecdotally it seems that pets (dogs) are a key barrier to accessing Temporary Accommodation for this cohort.

Although the data for the 2021-2022 financial year is limited, data for the first 3 months of the financial year 2022-2023 can be added to provide further context. In the 3 months between April and July a further 8 rough sleepers were recorded, all male, creating a starker gender breakdown.
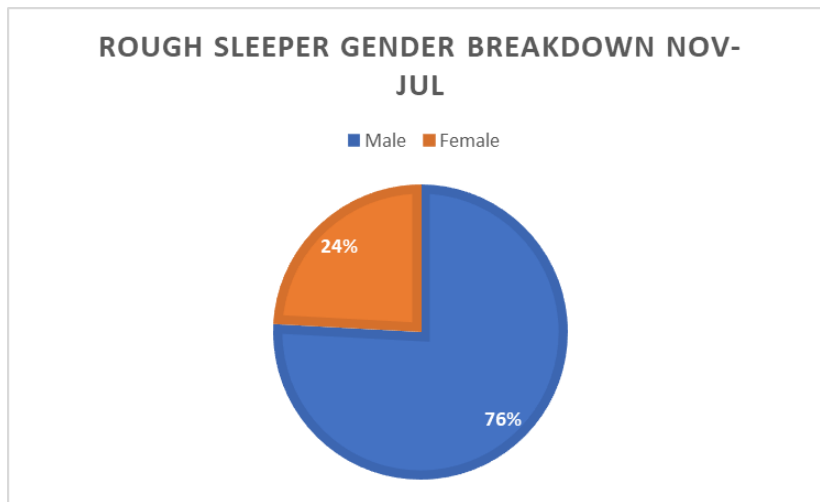
Figure 14: Gender breakdown of rough sleepers recorded Nov 21- July 22

The additional 8 rough sleepers have also changed the overall age breakdown, with those under 25 now more numerous than those aged 30-39. The youngest remains 19, but the oldest is now 68.
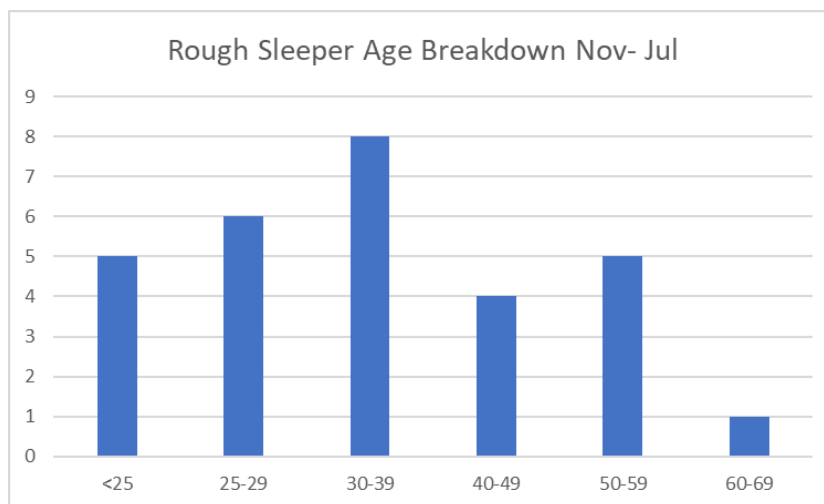
Figure 15: Age breakdown of Rough Sleepers Nov 21- July 22

No further rough sleepers were accommodated in B&B during the additional 3 months, but two did move into settled accommodation. The number of rough sleepers who did not engage increased during this time, further investigation is needed to establish what the barriers are to engagement.

Table 13: Outcomes for Rough Sleepers recorded Nov 21- July 22

Outcome	Number of Rough Sleepers
Moved into B&B	2
Little/ No/ Unable to engage or contact	14
Moved out of area	1

Engaging with support	8
New referral	1
Moved into PRS	1
Moved into RSL	1
Declined support	1

2.3. Local Housing Market Assessment

Monmouthshire's housing need data is currently being refreshed using the new Local Housing Market Allowance (LHMA) tool recently released by Welsh Government. At time of writing this has not been complete so the information in this section has been taken from the 2020 LHMA and Monmouthshire's Affordable Housing Prospectus 2022.

The Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), carried out in 2020, estimated a shortfall of 468 affordable homes per annum between 2020-2025 with the majority to be provided as Social Rent (68%), followed by Low Cost Home Ownership (25%) and finally Intermediate Rent (7%).

The net shortfall of affordable housing is calculated by taking the backlog of need (Housing Register data divided by five for each year of the LHMA period) and adding existing households falling into need and newly arising need. The committed supply of affordable housing is deducted from this figure leaving the estimated annual shortfall. It would, however, be inaccurate to assume that each home would only be occupied once over the next five years and not allowing for turnover could potentially inflate the requirement for new affordable housing. Current levels of turnover were calculated by dividing average lets over the last three years by existing social rented stock and the related ward level turnover for each property type was factored into the net shortfall for each ward to determine the annual affordable dwelling requirement.

The LHMA 2020 calculated the following are required for each year of the LHMA:

- 319.6 Social Rent properties
- 115.2 Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) properties
- 33 Intermediate Rent properties

Monmouthshire's Affordable Housing Prospectus provides information regarding current housing waiting list data. As of February 2022 there were 2246 households registered on Monmouthshire's housing waiting list with a recognised housing need. Figures 3 and 4 below provide a breakdown of this information by accommodation type (i.e. General Needs/Older Persons) and bedroom need. The largest demand overall is for one bedroom general needs accommodation, particularly in the Chepstow Housing Market Area. There are currently 326 households on the waiting list that have indicated they have mobility issues, 26 of whom require fully accessible accommodation.
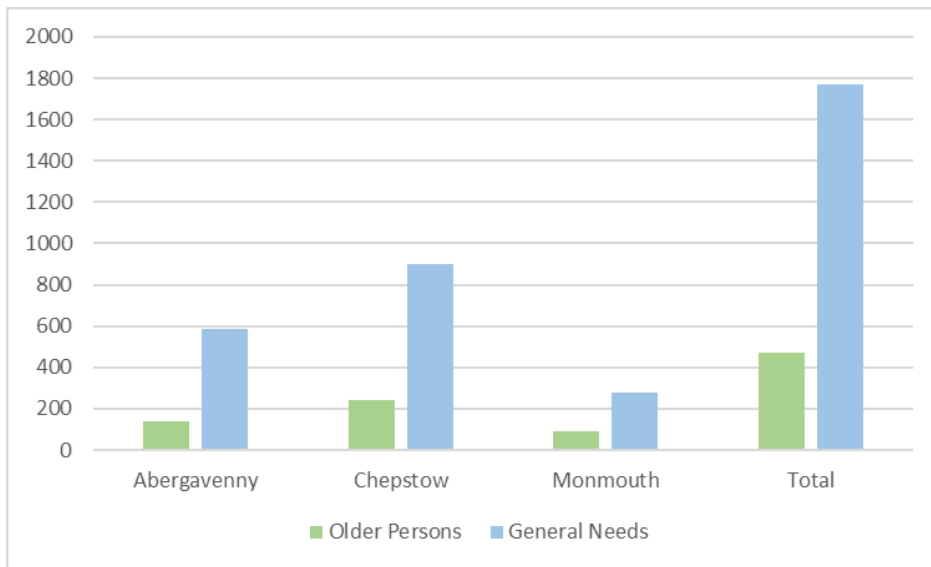
Figure 16: Current demand for General Needs and Older Person's Accommodation by Housing Market Area
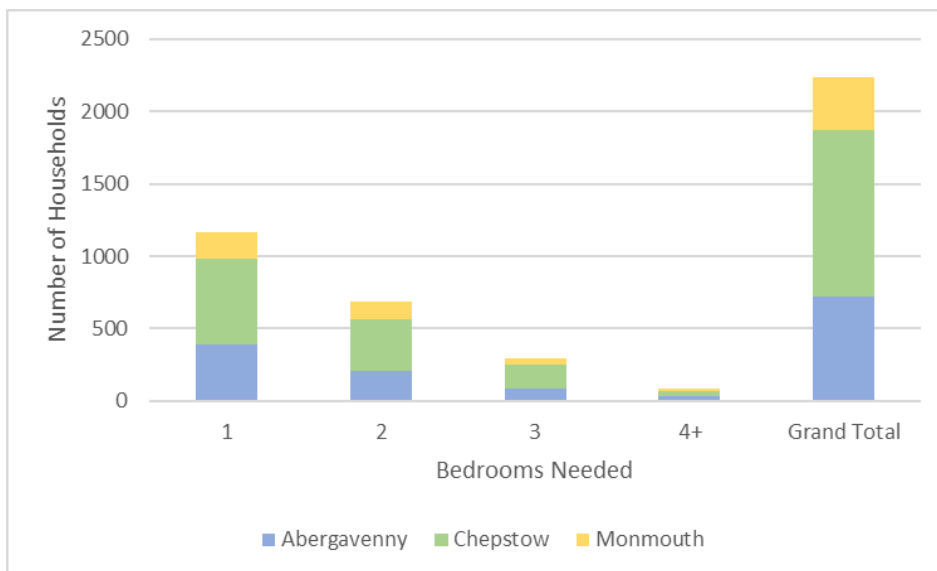
Figure 17: Current bedroom need by Housing Market Area

A needs assessment of households in TA carried out between September – November 2021 indicated a significant proportion of individuals with support needs, particularly mental health needs, young people and substance misuse issues. This, along with housing needs information from Health and Social Care has evidenced a need for:

- high/intensive supported accommodation for individuals with complex needs

- supported accommodation for people with mental health needs

- supported accommodation for young people

- supported accommodation for people with a learning difficulty

- additional Housing First accommodation (General Needs housing with intensive support)

Supported accommodation should be self-contained where possible and be located in one of the towns for ease of access to services.

2.4. Conclusion

The following summarises the current situation and projects future demand:

Affordable Housing Shortfall
The LHMA 2020 estimated a shortfall of 468 affordable homes per annum between 2020-2025 comprised of: • 319.6 Social Rent properties • 115.2 Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) properties • 33 Intermediate Rent properties

General Needs
There is a high demand for social rented housing across Monmouthshire with 2246 households currently on the waiting list (February 2022). There is a particularly high need for one and two bedroom accommodation located in the Chepstow housing market area. New developments should generally provide a high proportion of social rented accommodation to meet this demand.

Older Persons / Extra Care
There are currently 474 households on the waiting list aged 55 or over (February 2022), equating to approximately 21%, although not all of these households will require Older Person's housing. Additional Older Persons/Extra Care accommodation is not considered a priority at this time due to existing levels of Older Person's accommodation.

| Disabled/Accessible |
|---|
| There are currently 326 households on the waiting list (February 2022) that have indicated they have mobility issues, 26 of whom require fully accessible accommodation. |

Homelessness Provision (Temporary Accommodation)
Monmouthshire has seen a steep increase in the demand for Temporary Accommodation (TA) since the start of the pandemic. In February 2022 there were 180 households in TA including 90 households in bed and breakfast accommodation, compared to 21 households in TA in March 2020. Waiting times for move-on from TA are significantly high, averaging 11 months between April-December 2021. Increasing self-contained TA is a high priority for the Council to address long waiting times, reduce reliance and expenditure on bed and breakfast accommodation and work towards rapid rehousing ambitions. In particular, there is a need for self-contained emergency family accommodation in the north of the County.

Supported Housing/Specialist Provision Learning Disabilities / Mental Health Difficulties / Domestic Violence / Ex-offenders / Drug & Substance Misuse / Young Vulnerable

A needs assessment of households in TA carried out between September – November 2021 indicated a significant proportion of individuals with support needs, particularly mental health needs, young people and substance misuse issues. This, along with housing needs information from Health and Social Care has evidenced a need for:

- high/intensive supported accommodation for individuals with complex needs
- supported accommodation for people with mental health needs
- supported accommodation for young people
- supported accommodation for people with a learning difficulty
- additional Housing First accommodation

Supported accommodation should be self-contained where possible and be located in one of the towns for ease of access to services.

3. Section 3 - Assessing Support Needs

3.1.1. Context

A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted in April 2022 by partner agencies for all of those currently residing in temporary accommodation, placed by the Council. As professionals who know the clients best, support workers were asked to report on the level and type (up to 3) of need of each of their clients using the definitions below:

Table 14: Definitions of need used for the assessment of need

Definitions of Need			
Level of need		**Equivalent Support required**	**Definition**
1	LOW NEEDS	Less than 1 hour support per week	Likely to be a significant proportion of clients who have no or very low support requirements and who can be supported into settled accommodation with either a low level of support or potentially just signposting
2	MEDIUM NEEDS	Between 1 and 2 hours support per week	Likely to be the majority of clients who will require a Rapid Rehousing service with floating support. May also be the need to include some other professional support in order to support them to live independently in settled accommodation
3	HIGH NEEDS	Over 3 hours support per week	This category is where we would expect to see those who have complex needs and who should be offered, as a default, a form of Housing First support or intensive housing-led intervention.
4	INTENSIVE NEEDS	Potentially 24/7 support requirements	These should be clients who are unable to live independently at this moment in time, perhaps due to concerns around risk to self or others or perhaps even choice. Our expectations would be that professionals are engaged from a health and social care sectors, moving into settled accommodation must continue to be objective.

Table 15: Need types used for the assessment of need

Need Type
Families with Support Needs
Generic/Floating Support/Peripatetic
Men experiencing Domestic Abuse
People over 55 years of age with Support Needs
People with Chronic Illnesses (including HIV,Aids)
People with Criminal Offending History
People with Developmental Disorders (i.e. Autism)
People with Learning Disabilities
People with Mental Health Issues
People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities
People with Refugee Status
People with Alcohol Issues
People with Substance Misuse Issues
Single Parent Families with Support Needs
Single People with Support Needs not listed above (25 to 54)
Women experiencing Domestic Abuse
Young People who are Care Leavers
Young People with Support Needs (16 to 24)
Black Minority Ethnic
Gypsies and Travellers
Frail Persons
Vulnerable Two Parent Families
Migrant Workers

3.1.2. Demographics

A total of 186 people were assessed as part of this evaluation of needs as at April 2022.

Of the 186 clients there are almost double the number of males (120) than females (66). As part of the assessment support workers recorded the bedroom need for clients currently in TA. 148 clients are in need of a 1 bed property, of which 111 are Male. 27 clients are in need of 2 bed accommodation (20 female, 7 male), and 9 are in need of 3 bed accommodation, all female. 12 clients are recorded as having a pet or pets which is often a barrier to moving on to private rented or supported accommodation.
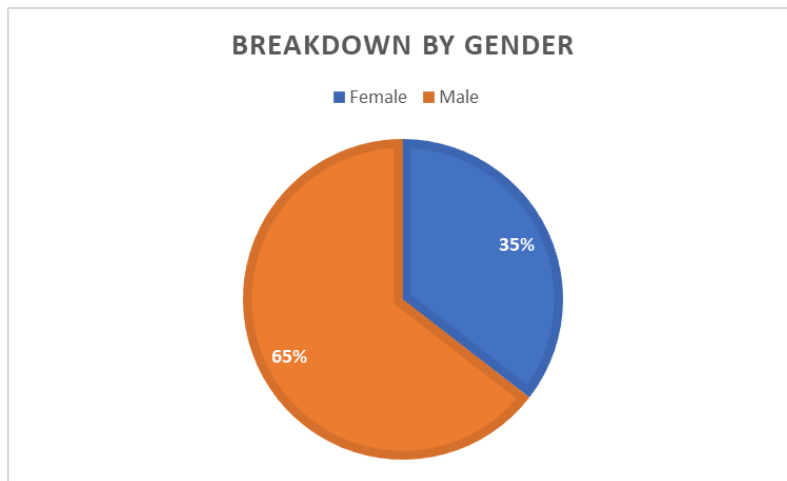
Figure 18: Breakdown of gender of those assessed

The age breakdown shows that younger residents (those under the age of 40) make up a over half of those requiring support in emergency accommodation, with the age category 30-39 being particularly overrepresented, closely followed by 16-24 year olds. This data would suggest that moving forward Monmouthshire needs to focus support and resources towards the younger population to prevent homelessness.
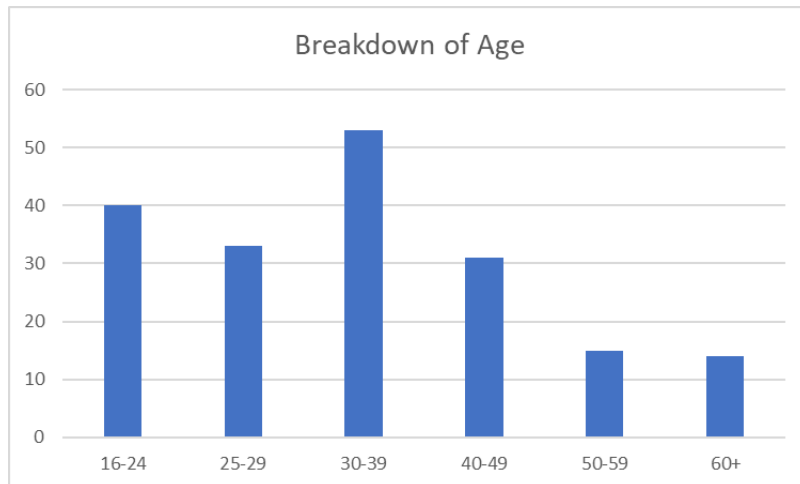
Figure 19: Age breakdown of those assessed

When comparing this to the previous Support Needs Assessment which took place between September and November 2021 we can see that the demographics around age remain consistent. Those under the age of 40 remain significantly more numerous than those under, both sets of figures show those under 40 to be around double that of over.
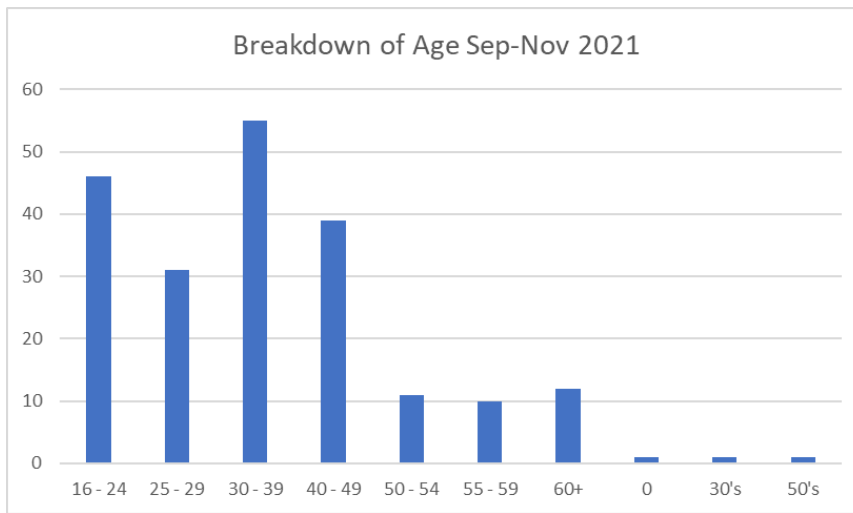
Figure 20: Breakdown of age of those assessed Sept- Nov 21

3.1.3. Type of need

Support workers were asked to select the lead need for clients they are currently working with from the set list above and where appropriate record a secondary and third need.

Figure 21: Breakdown of Lead Need type

All 186 cases had a lead need recorded, 136 had a secondary need and 60 a tertiary. The most commonly identified lead need was mental health with 40 cases, or 23%. The following most common lead needs are Single People with Support Needs (20 cases, 10.75%), Generic needs (19 cases, 10.22%), People with Substance Misuse Issues (18 cases, 9.68%) and Young People with Support Needs (12 cases, 6.45%). People with alcohol issues have been recorded separately to those with other substance issues but should these be amalgamated there are a total of 28 cases or 15% of the total, the second highest need type behind mental health.

People with Mental Health Needs remained the most occurrent need across secondary and tertiary needs by quite a significant margin. Outside of Mental Health People with

Substance Misuse, Single People with Support Needs and People with Alcohol issues continued to be significantly frequent needs.

Frequency of Need Recorded - Separated into Lead, Secondary and Tertiary April 2022
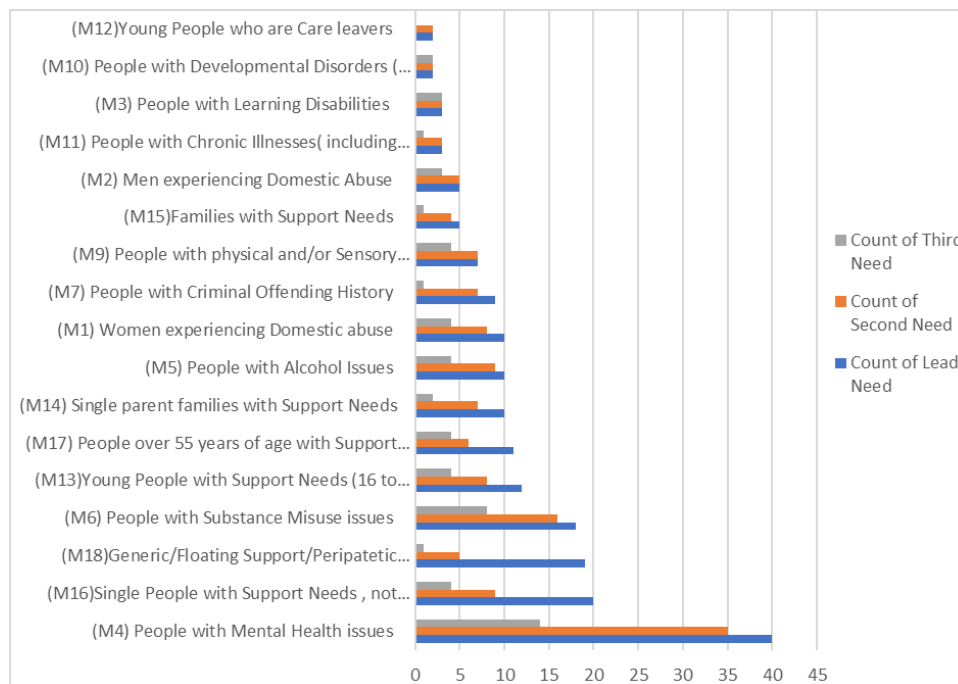
Figure 22: Type of Need recorded as lead, secondary and tertiary need

The distribution and trend of support needs captured in TA in April 2022 closely align to the findings of the same exercise carried out Sept- Nov 2021. Though there is not yet enough data to confidently establish this as a trend, anecdotally this pattern remains consistent. There are plans to continue assessing the support needs of those engaged in HSG services (which includes clients in TA) periodically going forward which will help to plan for services to best meet the need of clients.

Frequency of Need Recorded separated into Lead, Secondary and Tertiary Sept - Nov 2021
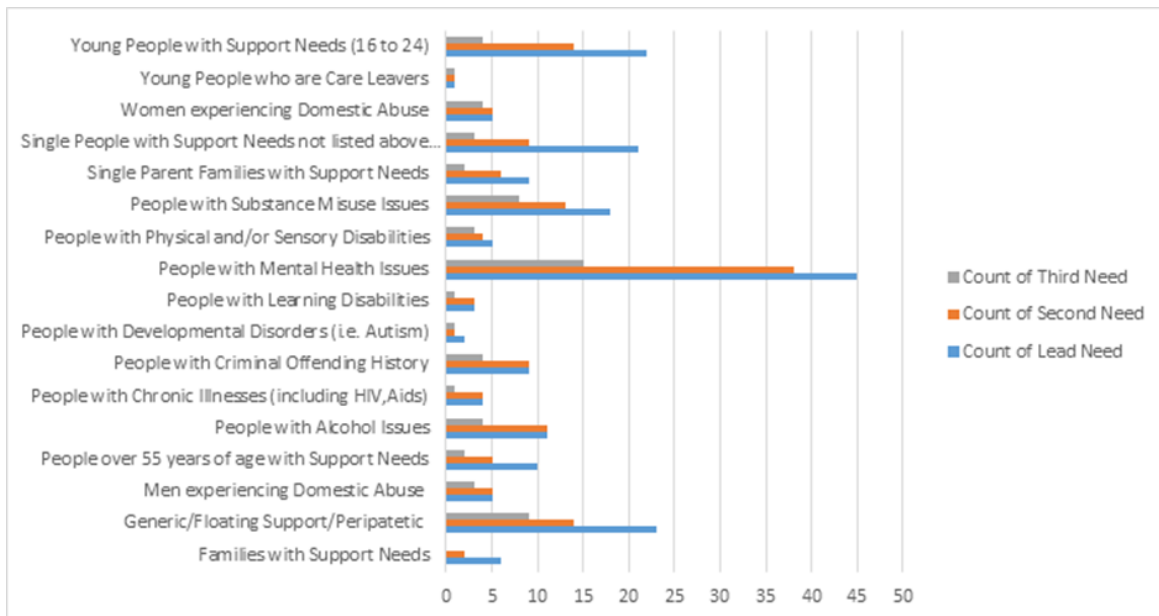
Figure 23: Type of Need recorded as lead, secondary and tertiary need Sept- Nov 21

3.1.4. Level of Need

Using the definitions above to gauge the level of needs support workers recorded the following need level breakdown for clients in TA.

Table 16: Level of need broken down into correlating housing need

Support Group Recommended	Recommended Housing	Recommended Support	Current case volumes (inc %)	Anticipated trend (inc %)*
Low/None	Mainstream housing	Individualised support	28.49	Data not available
Medium	Mainstream housing	Individualised, likely to include multi-agency support	45.7	Data not available
High	Mainstream housing	First/intensive floating support, including multi agency support	21.51	Data not available
Intensive Needs (24/7)	Supported Housing	Residential support	4.3	Data not available
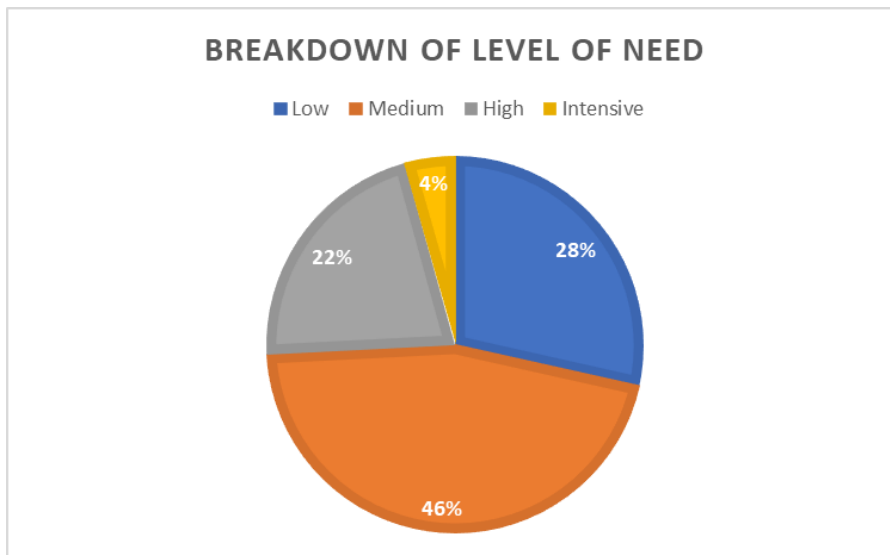
Figure 24: Breakdown of level of need of those assessed

Clients accommodated in TA during April 2022 were most commonly determined to have a 'Medium' level of needs, but this is not an overall majority. Those deemed to have 'High' needs are almost as occurrent as those described as having 'Low' needs. In comparison to the needs assessment completed Sept-Nov 2021 the proportion of those with 'Intensive' needs has remained fairly consistent; reducing by only 1%. Both 'Low' and 'High' needs have increased by 4% since Nov 2021.

When these figures are converted to equivalent housing need using the table above Monmouthshire requires more specialised accommodation for 25.8% of those in TA: 8 units in a residential supported accommodation, and 40 units of Housing First. Alongside this support is required for 85 clients, a proportion of which are likely to be deemed to require support exceeding the level provided by commissioned services who are largely aimed at those with 'Low' to 'Medium' needs.

Of those deemed to have 'High' support needs (40), 25% have a lead need of Mental Health, equally the proportion of those with Mental Health needs with a 'High' level of need is also 25%. Whilst numerically this equates to more people, the proportion of cases with Substance Misuse and Alcohol Problems with 'High' or 'Intensive' level of need is much higher at 72%. This indicates that those with Substance Misuse support needs, or problems with Alcohol are less likely to manage general needs accommodation. Monmouthshire would benefit from additional specialist support services for those with Substance Misuse, Alcohol issues and Mental Health needs.

The remaining three cases assessed as having 'Intensive' support needs have needs relating to disabilities and developmental disorders. Cases such as these will highly benefit from the mutli-agency partnership approach put forward by RRH.

3.1.5. Rough Sleepers and No Fixed Abode

As well as assessing the support needs of those in TA, a needs assessment was conducted by Monmouthshire's Assertive Outreach team on clients receiving support who are either NFA or Rough Sleeping.

A total of 34 people were receiving support from Assertive Outreach in April 2022, 12 were identified as rough sleeping, and 22 NFA (sofa surfing, living in campervans etc).

Of the 12 rough sleepers for those we have personal data, 8 were male and 3 female, and for the 22 NFA cases 17 were male and 5 female. Whilst it is unsurprising that there were more males in both cohorts, it is interesting that there is a greater disparity between male in female who are NFA than Rough Sleepers. There were 5 households noted as having at least one pet across NFA and Rough Sleepers, something which anecdotally has been a barrier to people accepting temporary accommodation.
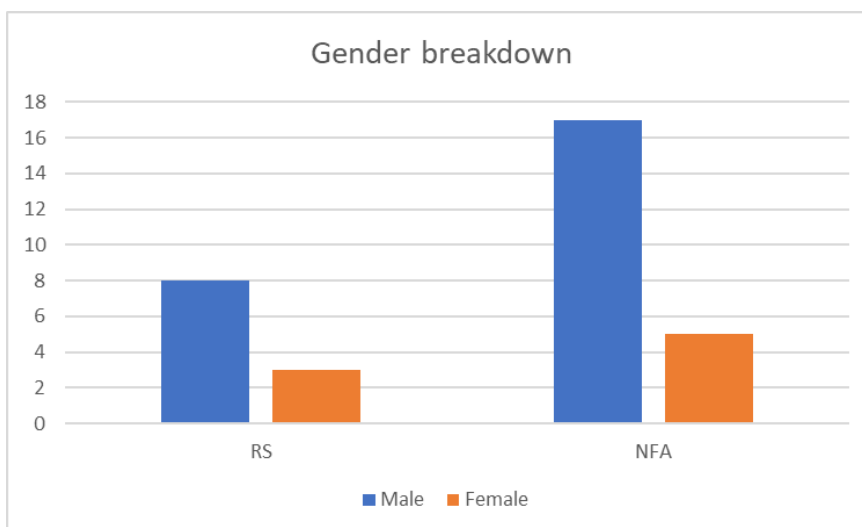
Figure 25: Gender breakdown of those Rough Sleeping and NFA

For rough sleepers where age is recorded there is a fairly even spread, though the number of those over 50 is somewhat surprising given the additional housing stock that is generally available. This may indicate a population of entrenched rough sleepers for whom rough sleeping has become preferred. Those who are NFA follow similar trends to those recorded in TA, those under the age of 40 greatly exceed those over.
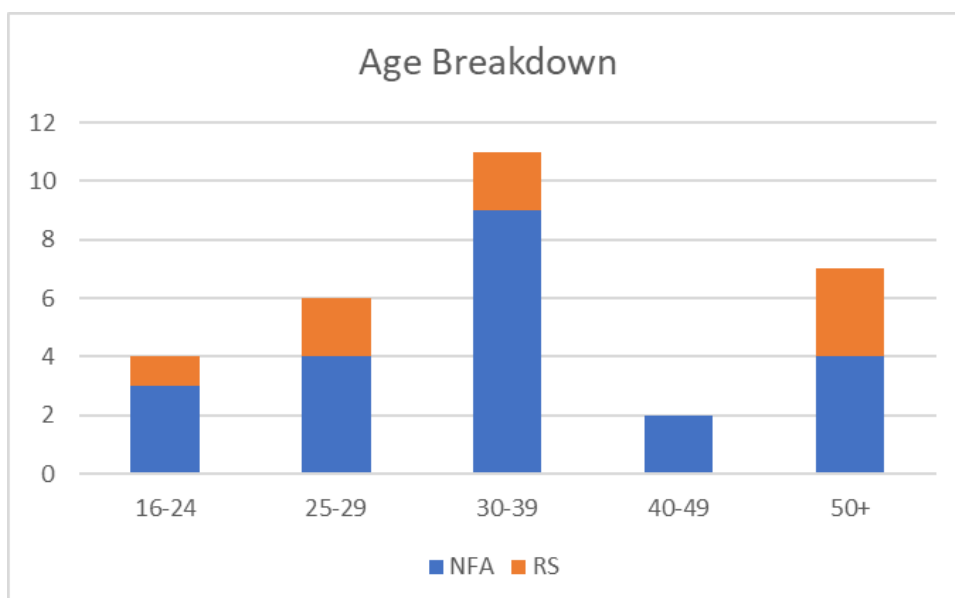
Figure 26: Age breakdown of those Rough Sleeping and NFA

Support Need- RS	Lead Need	Secondary Need	Tertiary Need	Total
Generic/Floating Support/Peripatetic	1			1
People with Learning Disabilities	1			1
People with Mental Health Issues	4	2		6
People with Substance Misuse Issues	1			1
Women experiencing Domestic Abuse	1			1
People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities		2	2	4
Single Parent Families with Support Needs		1	2	3
Single People with Support Needs not listed above (25 to 54)		1		1
Young People with Support Needs (16 to 24)		1		1
People over 55 years of age with Support Needs			1	1
Total	8	7	5	20

8 rough sleeper cases had their support needs recorded 50% of which had Mental Health recorded as a lead need, and 75% had Mental Health recorded as a lead or secondary need. Similarly, 64% of NFA cases had Mental Health as a lead or secondary need. This follows a similar, if not more prominent, trend of those in TA and further evidences the need for mental health provision within Monmouthshire. It might be prudent to look at Mental Health needs in greater detail to establish whether an increase in mental- wellbeing services are best placed to meet the increasing demand, or whether a number of those with Mental Health needs require intervention from medical services.

There were also a significant number of rough sleepers who were recorded as having Physical/ Sensory or Learning difficulties as a need across lead, secondary and tertiary need. This would suggest that working in partnership with adult social care and other primary health services may be required to fully meet the needs of these clients.

Unfortunately, the second most occurrent need for those who are deemed NFA was reported to be 'Single People with Support Needs not listed above (25 to 54)' which will require further investigation.

Table 18: Support needs of those NFA

Support Need- NFA	Lead Need	Secondary Need	Tertiary Need	Total
People over 55 years of age with Support Needs	1	1		2
People with Alcohol Issues	1		1	2
People with Criminal Offending History	2			2

People with Developmental Disorders (i.e. Autism)	1			1
People with Learning Disabilities	1		1	2
People with Mental Health Issues	8	6		14
People with Substance Misuse Issues	1	3		4
Single Parent Families with Support Needs	1			1
Single People with Support Needs not listed above (25 to 54)	5	4	1	10
Women experiencing Domestic Abuse	1			1
Young People with Support Needs (16 to 24)		1		1
Men experiencing Domestic Abuse		1		1
People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities			2	2
Families with Support Needs			1	1
Total	22	16	6	44

The assessed level of need across the 8 rough sleepers where information was available shows a fairly consistent spread across Low, High and Medium needs. It is surprising that there were no recorded 'Intensive' need cases amongst the rough sleeping population as anecdotally a number of those who have been evicted from our TA due to unmanageable behaviour have become street homeless. This may be worth investigating further as part of an increase in data collection where it can be established whether this is an anomaly or a trend.
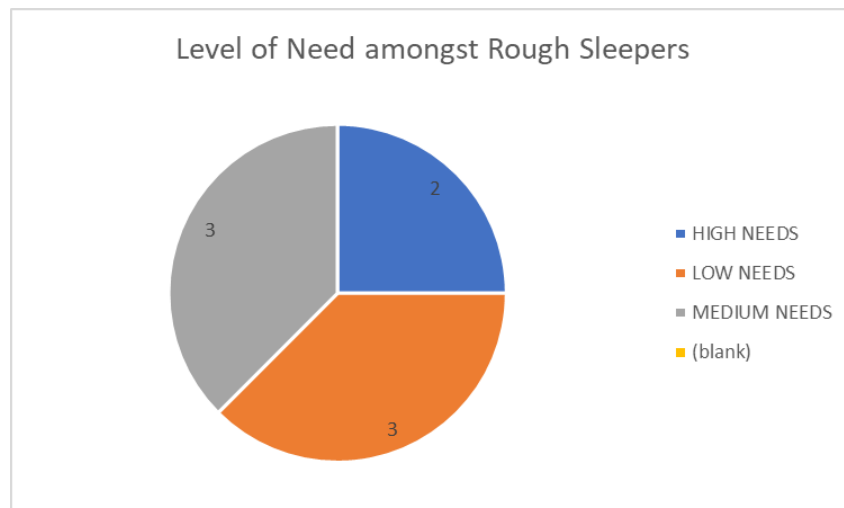
Figure 27: Level of need across Rough Sleepers
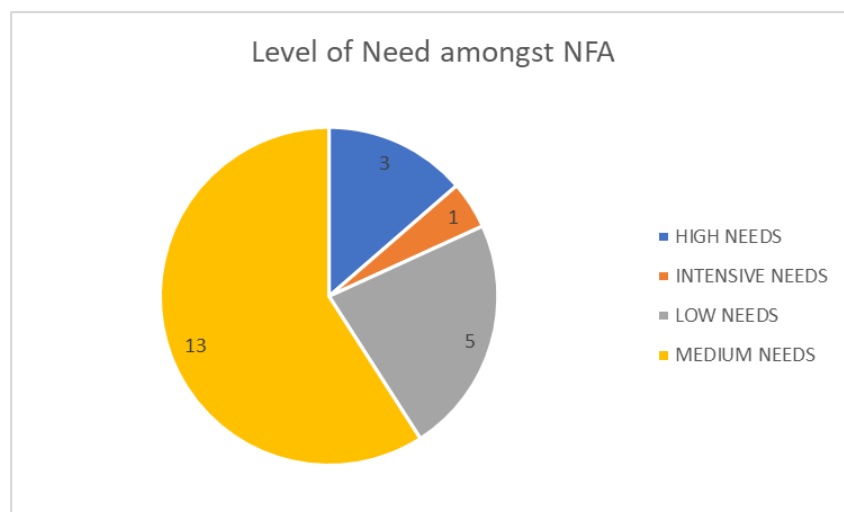
Figure 28: Level of need across NFA

There is more of an acute difference in the level of need amongst those categorised as NFA. The majority are recorded as 'Medium' level of need, which from the Local Authority's experience covers a spectrum from those who are Low/Medium to Medium/High. As such it is sensible to assume that there will be some recorded as 'Medium' needs who will require more intensive support than that currently available through HSG funded services, in addition to the 5 cases deemed 'High' or 'Intensive'.

3.2. Support Requirements

The Council's current Housing Support Programme, outside of specialist provision (Mental Health, Substance Misuse etc), is provided on a person-centred holistic basis. This means that, although the 4 specific support requirements (below) are covered by support providers to enable clients to move on from or maintain accommodation, they are not done so in isolation.

- Practical – includes support to set up utilities, source furniture and white goods packs, make benefit claims, budgeting as well as general tenancy sustainment support, etc. Someone to cope with issues of isolation and where they have learning or language difficulties.
- Engagement– support required to engage with people, including assertive outreach requirements.
- Stabilising – support required to maintain existing accommodation, including temporary accommodation.
- Progression – includes supporting people to develop additional learning and skills, possibly employment

As these 4 specific areas are amalgamated through current commissioned support they cannot be distinguished from each other within current data collection. They are however currently identified at a support planning stage which will be picked up by the associated support provider.

An action for this Plan will be to amend assessment procedures in order to understand the support required by commissioned services.

3.3. Accommodation Requirements

The assessment of support needs has informed current and future accommodation requirements. Accommodation requirements takes into consideration the following:

- Location; tenure; affordability; size; accessibility and other stock related issues to enable individuals to occupy settled housing; the provision of equipment and other important issues such as pets.

The findings and conclusions of the Support Needs Assessment is summarised below in the following supported accommodation requirements:

- General requirement – there is a need for single persons accommodation (148 units of accommodation are needed) located across each of the County's 4 main towns of Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth.
- Complex Needs Residential Supported Accommodation – there is currently a need for 8 units.
- Additional Housing First – there is currently a need for 40 additional units.
- Additional Young Persons accommodation – there is currently a need for 12 units.
- Supported accommodation for those with mental health (40 units of accommodation are needed) and substance misuse needs (18 units of accommodation).
- Pets – this is an area of challenge for the Council and it is known this is a barrier for some individuals. A need relating to 5 x NFA/Rough sleepers was identified.

The Support Needs Assessment has identified that there is a need for the support programme to be remodelled in order to meet the needs of those with medium to high needs. The majority of services provided through the Housing Support Grant programme are aimed at those with low to medium need. The programme, therefore, needs to be re-modelled which is a key action for this Plan.

3.4. Continual Assessment/Mainstreaming

Whilst two, one-off housing support needs mapping have been undertaken to respectively inform the Housing Support Programme Strategy and this Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, there is a need to establish a process that facilitates an on-going process of support needs mapping. It is proposed that housing support assessment templates are updated to capture low, medium, high and intensive support needs on an ongoing basis.

The Locata Housing Support IT system will also need to be updated accordingly and arrangements are being made for this to be implemented.

Capturing this additional information will enable the Council and support workers to know and understand the actual level of need at any one time. Importantly, it will facilitate the monitoring of changing and reducing support needs as individual applicants progress through their respective support journeys. As support needs reduce, assessments can be adjusted on an on-going basis.

4. Section 4 - Understand Local Temporary Accommodation Supply

4.1. Baseline

Prior to 2020 the number of individuals placed in temporary accommodation (TA) remained relatively low for the Service with 14 HMOs commissioned to accommodate individuals to prevent homelessness, together with a portfolio of private leased properties. B&B use was relatively rare, and often out of County due to a lack of agreed provision in the local area. Due to flooding in February 2020 MCC saw a slight inflation in the use of B&B accommodation to support victims of flooding across the County, however, as a yearly occurrence, usage is brief, and solutions are readily resolved. Following a change in guidance from WG in March 2020, Monmouthshire saw a huge increase in the demand for TA. The 14 HMOs of 72 units were converted into temporary accommodation to alleviate the pressure on the Authority and

a decision was made to continue with this arrangement post-pandemic. Despite increased availability of shared temporary accommodation it was necessary for the Council to employ costly B&B accommodation at levels not previously seen despite the number of overall presentations slightly declining.

As of 1st August 2022, the Council had 167 units of Temporary Accommodation, with a further 71 units of B&B / holiday accommodation. Monmouthshire emergency accommodation is reliant on B&B accommodation for 30% of its current placements. Monmouthshire has been in an advantageous position whereby very little holiday accommodation acquired during the pandemic has returned to its former use, with Landlords still keen to work with the Authority to alleviate the continued pressure felt by MCC Housing Options and RSL partners due to the lack of suitable move-on accommodation despite an annual 2021-2022 figure of 45% allocation of RSL properties to those with a homeless banding.

The tables below illustrate the increase in waiting times by bedroom need over the period 2020 –2022. Bands 2b & 3b are the Homeless Bandings for MCC's Common Housing Register. It illustrates that on average there has been an increase in waiting times for all bedroom needs by 3.46 months to 8.63 months, with the longest waiting time now being 9.42 months for those with a one-bedroom need. Although the toolkit average waiting time for move on in temporary accommodation is 26 weeks, it is felt that this average does not give a fair representation of those currently in temporary accommodation who have failed to move on. Indeed, this figure does not take into account those who remain in accommodation due to exclusion from the common housing register, as well as those who have had multi placements due to anti-social behaviour within accommodation. Moves such as these bring down the average times spent in temporary accommodation and it is felt that a further deep dive into these figures is necessary to give a fuller picture to the real time spent by people who have high support needs who remain in temporary accommodation longer, or that access accommodation intermittently during the year.

Table 19:Average Common Housing Register waiting times by band and bedroom need April 20- Mar 21

April 2020 - March 2021 Average Waiting Times (months)			
Bedrooms Needed	**Band 2B**	**Band 3B**	**Bands 2B & 3B**
1	6.71	2.00	6.51
2	4.33	N/A	4.33
3	3.71	N/A	3.71
4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overall Average	**5.23**	**2.00**	**5.17**

Table 20: Average Common Housing Register waiting times by band and bedroom need April 20- Mar 21

April 2021 - March 2022 Average Waiting Times (months)

Bedrooms Needed	Band 2B	Band 3B	Bands 2B & 3B
1	9.62	1.00	9.42
2	6.89	N/A	6.89
3	8.43	N/A	8.43
4	6.50	N/A	6.50
Overall Average	**8.73**	**1.00**	**8.63**

As of August 2022, there were 134 individuals (not households), 24 of those children, being accommodated under B&B lettings in the form of serviced apartments; self-contained holiday lets; and hotel accommodation. 131 individuals, 36 being children, were accommodated in private sector accommodation; shared accommodation and leased properties. In the last 18 months, MCC has seen a loss of 6 PSLs with a further 5 properties giving notice for the next 6 months. Over the same period MCC has gained 3 properties leased for temporary accommodation, however, demand continues to far outstrip the supply which means a disproportionate number of families will spend time in some form of holiday accommodation during their waiting time for permanent accommodation.

Table 21: Temporary Accommodation types

Temporary Accommodation Type	Baseline Capacity (Units as at 31/03/22)*	Groups accepted – any exclusions	On-site services available	Service charges (Y/N)	Notes
Temporary Accommodation					
B&B (with security)	26	16+ yrs Singles;Couples	Concierge; Floating Support	N	
B & B	Variable	16+ yrs All groups Single people; families	Floating Support	N	
Shared (with security)	4	18+yrs Singles	Concierge; floating Support	Y	
Shared Housing	77	Single people; ? X no. Of family accommodation	Floating support	Y	

Private Leasing	Variable	All groups Single people; family accommodation	Floating Support	N	
Supported Accommodation					
MIND Shared	28 units	Low / medium need 18yrs +	Non-24 hour floating support		
Pobl Young Persons	18	Low-High need 16-24yr olds	24hr support		
Pobl Young Persons Move on (Sunnyside)	4	Low / medium need 18 – 24yr olds	Floating support		
POBL Housing First	8 units	High needs	Floating support		
Refuge & Dispersed unit	5 family units (clarify) 2 self-contained properties	Domestic abuse	Non –24hr support		
Pobl Young Person's Shared Accommodation service	2 x shared flats (4 people)	18 – 24yr olds	Floating support / mentoring		

*not including those units anticipated to be lost post-pandemic

4.2. Usage

Currently MCC have 3 properties that utilise security / concierge service. Two of these premises are B&B accommodation and the third is 4 units of shared accommodation to cater for people who have lost other TA placements but have high support needs and are deemed at risk due to their mental or physical health. On the whole this type of accommodation is used to manage people with an offending history, those who have lost units of shared accommodation; those with substance issues; or those who have exhibited challenging behaviour that cannot be managed without supervision. In conjunction with security, an allocated MCC Accommodation Officer and HSG funded support workers provide housing management and support to individuals at the accommodation. There is also access to a substance misuse Assertive Outreach worker via GDAS. Shared properties are used to accommodate single people with a range of support needs, with the same configuration as mentioned above working across all these properties. Self – contained properties will contain a mixture of single people and families, again, with Accommodation Officers and support workers delivering the housing management and support function.

The current configuration of accommodation does not necessarily have a firm sense of a pathway from one type of TA to another, however, families in holiday accommodation will be prioritised for any self-contained accommodation as it becomes available. Single people are also moved on from B&B accommodation into shared and PSL as vacancies arise. However, due to service charges in shared and PSLs, there is very often resistance from individuals to move on which creates voids within properties.

4.3. Inclusivity

In general there are no exclusions from temporary in accommodation, however, properties are essentially designated for use by single adults; female only accommodation; family accommodation etc. No pets are allowed (as per the requirement of proprietors) in most B&B accommodation, however, some level of pet provision has been achieved in certain establishments through negotiation with owners and issuing pet bonds.
There have also been some exceptions in leased properties via negotiation with the landlord.

There is an acknowledgement that when renegotiating new lease agreements, allowing pets will become an important consideration in negotiations.

5. Section 5 – Plan the Temporary Accommodation Transformation

5.1. Vision
To successfully implement the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, an expansion of the Council's portfolio of temporary accommodation is needed and planned. A key driver is the need to reduce the reliance and use of B & B.   At 1st September 2022, 93 households were accommodated in B & B, made up of the following:

- 69 singles. Includes:
    - 12 x 18-24 year old singles
    - 2 x 16/17 year old singles
- 11 couples
- 13 families

In addition, it is also proposed to have a programme of improvement in respect of the Council's existing temporary accommodation to improve the quality of temporary accommodation and work towards the concept of 'temporary homes.' A key component of improving the standard of temporary accommodation is the need to start phasing out the use of Shared Housing as per Welsh Governments Annex D accommodation standard, although in order to continue managing the current situation, there will be a short-term need to temporarily expand the use of shared housing, which in part will help to reduce the use of B & B, before the start of reducing the number of shared housing units can begin.

The temporary accommodation vision for Monmouthshire is a mixed portfolio of accommodation in terms of size, type, location and ownership made of the following provision:

Table 22: Temporary Accommodation Transformation Plan by accommodation type

Temporary Accommodation	Proposal	Units/Stock at 1st September 2022	Transformation Vision & Target

Interim Shared Complex Need Scheme (Former Family Hostel)	To continue with this provision until the Council is able to establish a suitable building with the provision of on-site support.	4 + 1 room currently being used as an office	De-commission existing interim use and convert to 4 x 1 bed self-contained flats (assuming viable and feasible). 4 units
Self-contained Private Leased accommodation (includes leasing from RSL's)	To continue with this provision and seek to identify additional units through Monmouthshire Lettings	60 units but 5 due to be handed back	Increase the number of units to x or y units pa. To include LSW 50 units (WG target for Monmouthshire) by 2027 To include units of furnished accommodation 55 units
Self-contained Managed Accommodation	As above	30 units	Increase to 50 Units 20
Shared housing	As above. Whilst it's acknowledged that these properties don't meet WG Annex D standard, there will be a need to retain this accommodation to facilitate the reduced use of B & B.	74 units	In the interim increase the number of units to 92 by 2027 To include establishing an interim shared-housing scheme for young people with low needs To include x units of furnished accommodation 18 units
Emergency Self-Contained Family Accommodation	Identify	4	Establish a further 4 or 5 unit-scheme for the North of the County 5
Emergency Shared Family Accommodation	Continue with this provision for the duration of this plan	6 person	Due to being shared accommodation, it is anticipated that this provision will ideally need to be decommissioned and an alternative use

			identified. No date has been set for this and will be subject to
Expansion of existing Housing First provision	Continue to identify suitable self-contained properties to accommodate clients	8 units	To establish a further 5 units
Youth Housing First		Nil	To establish 5 units
Utilise existing MCC owned residential assets to create self-contained accommodation		1	To establish a further 6 units *Colemendy* *Leechpool* *Thornwell x 4*
For MCC to purchase and acquire self-contained accommodation from the open market		Nil	20 units To include town centre/space above shops accommodation
For MCC to repurpose existing non-residential assets to create self-contained temporary accommodation		Nil	10 units *Market Hall* *Severn View* *Hanbury House* *Colemendy*
Utilisation of MMC on MCC owned land, including incorporating the need into a pending car park review		Nil	10 units

In line with the priorities of this plan there is a need to consider how the average length of stay in temporary accommodation can be minimised (in part due to exclusion/suspension reasons and lack of suitable accommodation) in respect of young people and those experiencing mental health and substance misuse issues. This is an arising action for this plan.

5.2. Key Challenges
The following are key challenges:

Former Emergency Family Hostel
This accommodation in the north of the County is no longer consider suitable for temporary accommodation. Amongst other reasons, the property currently provides shared housing and, therefore, does not meet the Welsh Government Annex D standard. The property at present is being used as an interim complex needs facility with four units, facilitated by a concierge/security provider and support being provides through an Assertive Outreach provider. Whilst the current use is currently critical, the aim is to establish dedicated complex needs schemes both north and south which will enable the Council to withdraw from the current use of this property. There is a need to undertake a costed options appraisal to inform the future use of the property.

Shared Housing – Single Persons & Emergency Family Accommodation
At the end of October 2022, the Council has a portfolio of 72 units of shared housing. This accommodation does not meet Welsh Governments Annex D standard due to not being self-contained. Shared housing in the short-term will continue to provide critical accommodation, helping to minimise the use of B & B. Also in the short-term, it is regarded that there is a need to continue to acquire more shared housing to help address the current B & B challenges. In the medium to long-term though the Council technically considers there will be a surplus of shared housing. The aim, therefore, through a combination of actions including increasing the number of self-contained units of single persons temporary accommodation, developing new permanent homes and redesignating existing social housing the aim is reduce the need for shared housing.

The Council has recently acquired the use of a 6-person property through the support of a local RSL. The property was purchased prior to Welsh Governments Annex D standard being published. Whilst the standard and finish of this property is high, it nevertheless is shared accommodation and, therefore, the ultimate aim will be to replace with self-contained emergency family accommodation.

5.3. Transformation Plan
The table below provides an overview of the Council's transformation proposal:

Table 23: Transformation Plan

Name of accommodation	Current single night unit capacity (1st Sept 2022)	Target 2027 capacity by 2027	Brief description of work required	Approx Costs	Funding Source
Interim Shared Complex Need Scheme (Former Family Hostel)	4 + office	4	Decommission and convert to 4 x self-contained general need temporary accommodation units	Not known	MCC Prudential Borrowing
Self-contained Private Leased accommodation (includes leasing from RSL's)	60	80	None anticipated	Not known	MCC Revenue
Leasing Scheme Wales	0	50	Not known	Not known	LSW Grant
Self-contained Managed Accommodation	30	50	None anticipated	Not known	MCC Revenue
Shared housing	72	100	Lease existing accommodation	Not known	MCC Revenue
Emergency Self-Contained Family Accommodation	4 units + 6 person	9 units + 6 person	Acquire & convert an existing building	Not known	SHG

			or new build in the North of Monmouthshire		
Utilise existing MCC owned residential assets to create self-contained accommodation	1	5	Convert existing MCC units x 2 Demolish x 1 and redevelop x 4	Not known	SHG/TACP/ S106 AH contributions MCC Prudential Borrowing
For MCC to purchase and acquire self-contained accommodation	0	20	Convert to bring up to required standard	Not known	SHG/TACP/ S106 AH contributions/ MCC Prudential Borrowing
For MCC to repurpose existing non-residential assets to create self-contained temporary accommodation	0	7	Convert and re-purpose existing office space x 7	Not known	SHG/TACP/ S106 AH contributions/ MCC Prudential Borrowing
Utilisation of MMC	0	10	Identify suitable sites and product then construct	Not known	SHG/TACP/ S106 AH contributions/ MCC Prudential Borrowing
New - Complex Needs Provision, Chepstow	0	5	Repurpose existing commercial space / new build	Not known	SHG/HCF
New – Complex Needs Provision – North	0	5	Repurpose existing commercial space / new build	Not known	SHG/HCF
Housing First Units	9	15	Identify suitable existing social housing units None anticipated	No cost anticipated	No capital implications
Youth Housing First	0	5	Identify suitable existing social housing units None anticipated	No cost anticipated	No capital implications

6. Section 6 - Development of the Plan

6.1. Vision

The vision for the Plan is:

*Connected partnerships prevent homelessness and if not possible,
time in temporary accommodation is brief,
facilitating well-being.*

This Plan sets out the four key strategic priorities the Council and partners have agreed to implement and necessary to work towards the vision. The main objective is to prevent homelessness occurring in the first instance, but if it does occur to ensure it is brief and non-repeated.

The priorities that have been set to achieve the vision are:

6.1.1. **Priority 1 - Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunit**y (as per the Housing Support Programme Strategy)

Reasons for this priority are:

- Homeless prevention is a statutory duty of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- There is a need to reduce the numbers of people coming through needing homeless accommodation, in part due to an inadequate supply and type of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation.[4]
- There is a desire to move to a more proactive approach that is able to identify and be responsive to changing housing need rather than to deal with housing need on a reactive basis and at a point of a homeless application.
- Homeless prevention levels have reduced from 60% in 2020/21 to 49% in 2021/22.

Key objectives are to:

- Improve homeless prevention performance to 60% for 2023
- To further increase the capacity of the Housing Options Team with a new post to receive initial homeless presentations, thereby helping to free up capacity for existing capacity of existing Housing Options Officers to focus on homeless prevention.
- To identify and agree a suite of 'early warning' triggers
- Implement 'early warning' triggers that highlight a possible risk of future homelessness enabling those households identified to be targeted through partnership working with other support agencies.
- Align with the Monmouthshire Money Matters campaign, including promoting the availability of Discretionary Homeless Prevention Grant funding.

6.1.2 **Priority 2 - Increase the <u>supply</u> of affordable and <u>settled</u> accommodation**

Reasons for this priority are:

- The supply of temporary, supported and permanent housing is not sufficient to meet homeless demand.[5]
- Social housing vacancy turnover is low
- There is an excessive reliance on the use of B & B. Not only is this accommodation not suitable, the provision is not financially sustainable.[6]
- Accessing the private rented sector is difficult[7]
- New properties through the Council's development programme (eg Social Housing Grant programme) aren't being completed in sufficient numbers

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[4] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.4
[5] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.3, 2.4
[6] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 4.1
[7] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.1

Key objectives are:

- To increase the number of new properties developed through maximising the availability of Social Housing Grant funding (and achieve 100% use of the funding) and seek to utilise the Transitional Accommodation Capital funding.
- To maximise the proportion of social housing vacancies being allocated to homeless applicants (whilst seeking to avoid impacting detrimentally on other housing need groups eg medical, transfers etc.
- To increase the provision of Housing First Accommodation
- To establish supported housing facility for those with complex needs
- To increase the supply of dedicated accommodation for young people, including those with high needs, including Youth Housing First
- For the Council to directly acquire accommodation
- To sign private landlords up to long leases utilising the Leasing Scheme Wales resources. Target 2 units 2022/23
- To continue to develop Monmouthshire Lettings including strengthening its branding and broadening its offer.

6.1.3 Priority 3 - Provide timely and effective <u>support</u> to <u>sustain</u> accommodation

Reasons for this priority are:

- Effective and timely support underpins homeless prevention.
- *At April 2022, 186 clients in TA were assessed as having at least one support need. 26% of these were described as having High and Intensive needs[8]*
- There is a reliance on the use of B & B.
- Effective and timely support helps people to help people reduce their support needs and to prepare for independent living
- There is a need to move people into settled accommodation who aren't considered to be 'tenant ready.'
- There is a need to reduce placement breakdown in temporary accommodation.
- There is a need to eliminate the use of concierge/security due to being financially unsustainable.

Key objectives are:

- To identify funding shortfalls
- To irradicate existing gaps in support and supported accommodation provision and for the programme of support to meet all identified needs.
- To reduce placement breakdowns
- To enable housing associations to provide accommodation to those who are considered to be 'tenant-ready.'
- To assist those with support needs to enable them to live independently
- Review Housing Support Grant Services and subject to on-going need remodel, recommission/de-commission during 2023.
- To identify other types of support to complement and add value to the Housing Support Grant programme.

6.1.4 Priority 4 - Maximising resources and benefits through well connected partnerships

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[8] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 3.2

The reasons for this priority are:

- Homelessness cannot be regarded as a housing only problem. There needs to be a whole systems approach to tackling the underlying issues relating to homelessness including the prevention of homelessness, providing support and facilitating access to accommodation.
- Placement break-down relating to support needs is not un-common.
- There are resource implications to successfully implement this Plan

Key objectives include:

- Partner agencies provide a suite of early warning triggers to facilitate early intervention
- No wrong front door to access homelessness
- Increasing the support available for homeless households
- Increasing the provision of temporary, supported and settled accommodation
- For all internal (Planning, Social Care – Childrens and Adults, Finance and Estates) to align with supporting homelessness and Rapid Rehousing.
- For homelessness and Rapid Re-housing to be a priority of the Corporate and Community Plan
- To engage with neighbouring Gwent authorities in respect of Rapid Re-Housing through the Housing, Health & Social Care Partnership
- For Rapid Rehousing to be a standing agenda items for the Housing Support Grant Provider Forum and the Monmouthshire Homesearch Partnership Operational Group.

6.2. Homelessness Prevention

It is considered that homeless prevention needs to be the overriding priority of this Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan, to either enable people to remain in their current accommodation where it is safe to do so, or to identify alternative accommodation. In all regards there is a need wherever possible to identify opportunities to intervene earlier. In helping more people to prevent their homelessness, the aim is to reduce the demand and need for temporary accommodation.

Current challenges to preventing homelessness include:

- The proportion of homeless applicants who are actually homeless at the point of presentation.
- Current Housing Options Team capacity relating to high caseloads[9]. There is a need to streamline procedures to enhance Housing Options Officers and Homeless Prevention Officers capacity and to reduce time on non-homeless prevention activity.
- The Private Rented Sector is difficult to access due to general private sector availability (it's known that this is a contracting sector in Monmouthshire) and due to market rents compared to Local Housing Allowance rates[10].
- People experiencing poverty, particularly in relation to the current cost of living crisis, which may be further compounded by recent interest rate rise and further increases forecast.
- Current limitations on support availability. For example, specialist support for those with substance misuse issues for those threatened with homelessness[11].

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[9] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.2.1
[10] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.1
[11] RRHTP, MCC, 2022; 2.1

- Homeless prevention levels have fallen.

This Plan prioritises young people and those experiencing mental health and substance misuse issues. It's important that the Council particularly prevents the homelessness of these groups for a number or reasons including:

- Reducing the likelihood of needing to place in temporary accommodation and in the short-term to mitigate against the possibility of needing to use inappropriate accommodation placements
- Interventions can start earlier and mitigate against the need for crisis interventions
- Pathways to accommodation can be planned, managed and supported.

Proposals:
- To review and improve bespoke information and advice to specific target groups.
- With partner services and agencies, establish a suite of triggers implemented by wider agencies to facilitate earlier and targeted intervention
- To appoint a first contact duty officer for the Housing Options Team, to help increase capacity, improve work-flows and flexibility for Housing Options staff to undertake more homeless prevention work.
- To undertake a systems review to identify and eliminate identified 'systems' waste to streamline procedures.
- Identify opportunities to expand substance misuse support to those not living in temporary accommodation.
- Through the Compass service, identify young people at risk of homelessness and establish housing pathways.
- Establish a Young Persons Action Plan

6.3. Rapid Rehousing Transformation

Successful delivery of this plan requires a number of key challenges to be addressed, most of which have been touched upon in some way elsewhere in the document. In summary, to transform Monmouthshire's homeless service to a Rapid Rehousing approach, tackling the following key challenges and actions are the focus of this Plan, which will be a gradual process over the period of the Plan:

Challenges:

Prevention
- Whilst the principle of identifying early warning triggers for earlier intervention is accepted and indeed, triggers have been identified. It is, however, critical that prevention is not just seen as a Housing Options Team responsibility. Equally, it's important that there is sufficient staff capacity within the Council to receive and process additional referrals (many of which are anticipated to be outside of 'statutory homelessness') in the context of already very high existing caseloads.

Increase the supply of affordable and settled accommodation
- The disparity between market rents in the private rented sector and Local housing allowance rates together with the general difficulty accessing private sector accommodation. The shared room local housing allowance rate for under 35's is a particular issue.
- There is a general lack of single persons accommodation.
- The issue of phosphates has been affecting developments in the Northern part of the county for some time with several developments currently on hold, although It is

believed and hoped that improvement works will soon be commenced at local treatment works which will allow developments in the Abergavenny area to be re-considered.

- A decision has been taken for the Council to purchase properties to provide Temporary Accommodation in order to reduce Bed and Breakfast use and to provide local, sustainable accommodation for households whilst addressing budget deficits. However, Housing Benefit (HB)/Universal Credit (UC) regulations for Council-owned Temporary Accommodation are proving to be complex and it's understood that the regulations prevent housing benefit being payable where the Council own and manage temporary accommodation.
- In addition, the Council is experiencing difficulties appointing a contractor to carry out works to bring Council-owned assets up to affordable housing standards due to capacity issues. The Council is unable to undertake these works in house due to insufficient resources.

Housing Support
- The ability to meet the housing support needs through existing resources of not just those living in temporary accommodation but also those who have been identified at possible risk of homelessness and those who have moved on to permanent/settled housing.
- There is a need for more specialist support
- Staff recruitment for Providers and carrying staff vacancies.

Actions
Headline actions in respect of the above challenges include:

- Working closely with partner services and agencies to promote the use of early warning triggers and early intervention and that assistance should start wherever possible before the point of crisis and potential homeless applications. Also, promote the use of operational settings such as the Housing Intervention Panel and case review meetings and strategic partnership meetings and forums.
- Continue to develop and market Monmouthshire Lettings, including broadening the 'services and product availability to landlords. This in part, will be to be facilitated through proposed further staffing changes.
- Continue seeking to explore the Council purchasing and acquiring accommodation for use as temporary accommodation.
- Continue to utilise and repurpose Council assets.
- To review all Housing Support Grant services with a view to recommissioning to ensure the programme meets local support needs. This will need to be complemented by identifying other support. It's incumbent on the Council also to ensure that services are delivery effectively as possible through streamlined management and delivery.

6.4. Accommodation Model
A priority of this plan is to increase the supply of affordable and settled accommodation. Specific objectives of this plan are to reduce the use of and reliance on B & B, in part, through increasing the availability of and access to other good quality temporary, supported and permanent accommodation. Below provides an overview of the proposal for Monmouthshire.

Future Modelling of Temporary Accommodation.
Key challenges to the future of modelling of temporary accommodation include:

- Encouraging new private sector landlords to make properties available for homelessness through the Council's Monmouthshire Lettings Service. There is a need to demonstrate to private landlords that the Council's 'offer' is attractive and competitive with Letting Agency services.
- Private sector market rents often exceed local housing allowance rates.
- The need to hand back properties to private landlords working with the Council due to the desire to sell their properties or use for other purposes. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest landlords are concerned about the impending implementation of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.
- The issue of phosphates impacting on acquiring and converting existing properties in the north of the County. In addition, newly released flood plans are restricting development opportunities.
- Meeting Welsh Governments Welsh Design Quality Standard for acquiring existing accommodation using Social Housing Grant. Achieving the WDQR can be challenging with existing accommodation for reasons such as space and ability to achieve energy efficiency standards.
- The Council intends to start purchasing properties for use as temporary accommodation. Housing Benefit regulations prevent the Council from directly managing such accommodation until such time the Council is an approved Social Housing Provider. The Council also needs to plan for purchasing accommodation to ensure properties can be properly managed and maintained.

The vision for the future portfolio of temporary accommodation:

- Self-contained emergency family accommodation in both the north and the south of the County. At present there is no dedicated provision in the north of Monmouthshire.
- Increasing private sector and social housing leased and managed accommodation under Monmouthshire Lettings. This includes taking on properties under long leases using Leasing Scheme Wales funding.
- Increased provision of furnished accommodation.
- There will be a need to continue with shared housing for single people. The intention is to look to start phasing out the use of shared housing towards the latter end of this plan.
- Increasing temporary self-contained accommodation owned by the Council through acquiring existing accommodation.
- Furnished shared housing for young people with low needs.

Future Modelling of Supported Accommodation.
Key challenges to the future of modelling of supported accommodation include:

- The issue of phosphates impacting on acquiring and converting existing properties in the north of the County. In addition, newly released flood plans are restricting development opportunities.
- Property and land values impacting on viability of potential schemes.
- Meeting Welsh Governments Welsh Design Quality Standard for acquiring existing accommodation using Social Housing Grant. Achieving the WDQR can be challenging with existing accommodation for reasons such as space and ability to achieve energy efficiency standards.
- Due to the capacity of the Housing Support Grant budget, it would be a challenge to fund any new schemes that effectively expand the existing Housing Support Grant Programme. This is acknowledged by Welsh Government. There would be a need to identify additional funding.

The vision for the future portfolio of supported housing through specialist support and third sector organisations:

- An expansion of the existing Housing First provision.
- Introduction of Youth Housing First provision
- An expansion of Young Peoples supported housing and able to accommodate those with high support needs together with additional self-contained step-down
- Schemes for those with complex needs in both the north and south of Monmouthshire
- Mental health supported housing able to accommodate those with high support needs.
- Mental health supported shared housing for those with low to medium needs
- Domestic abuse refuge with an expansion of dispersed housing stock

Future Modelling of Permanent Housing
Key challenges to the future of modelling of supported accommodation include:

- The issue of phosphates impacting on acquiring and converting existing properties in the north of the County. In addition, newly released flood plans are restricting development opportunities.
- Property and land values impacting on viability of potential schemes.
- The need to continue meeting the needs of those in housing need for reasons other than homelessness, such as medical circumstances.
- Achieving and maintaining balanced communities.
- The potential implications of the Renting (Homes) Wales Act 2016.
- The current Housing Register exclusion procedures will potentially impact on people moving quickly into permanent and settled housing.
- Ensuring comprehensive support is currently not available but necessary to enable those who aren't considered tenancy ready to move into settled accommodation.

The vision for the future portfolio of permanent and settled housing:

- An increased proportion of social housing vacancies are allocated to homeless people. (Due to the capacity of the local social housing stock, rather than set a specific target it is proposed to monitor and review the numbers and proportion of social lets on an on-going basis)
- The introduction of shared housing by RSL's as a property designation to maximise the use of existing stock and increase the availability of single person accommodation
- The introduction by RSL's of social housing units designated and ring-fenced to homeless people
- The re-designation of social housing stock by RSL's to increase the availability of social housing for single and homeless people
- The Council potentially starts to provide permanent and settled housing a social housing provider.
- Those who aren't tenancy ready will be able to move into settled accommodation with a comprehensive package of support.
- The exclusion policy relating to the Housing Register will be reviewed to reduce exclusion as a barrier to acquiring settled accommodation.
- Permanent and settled accommodation is provided in town centres, including space above shops
- Commercial space identified to repurpose into residential accommodation.

6.5. Pandemic Response

In 2020, as a Covid-19 public health measure, the Council was requested by Welsh Government to ensure anyone sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough was able to access safe and stable accommodation. Welsh Government subsequently issued 'Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing related support' requiring the Council to not only to continue supporting those brought into temporary accommodation and supporting them into long term accommodation but also to transform homeless services to achieve the Welsh Government vision of homelessness being rare, brief and unrepeated.

Whilst the Council supports and welcomes Welsh Government proposals, the impact of the pandemic resulted in a significant increase in the number of people needing temporary homeless accommodation. Due to the lack of move on accommodation the use of temporary accommodation has grown over the last two years resulting in people, the majority with support needs, experiencing length stays in temporary accommodation. It has, therefore, been necessary for the Council to implement a range of interim measures necessary to implement Welsh Government guidance and manage the changes but also to start the process of transforming homeless provision in Monmouthshire. Both the Council and Welsh Government have supported these interim measures. In addition to permanent changes, the interim measures that have been taken to support the impact of the pandemic have included:

- Acquiring new and additional B & B placements. This was supported by Welsh Government through the Covid-19 Hardship Funding. The aim is a gradual and phased reduction of the use of B & B.
- Creating two Temporary Accommodation Officers (B & B) who provide dedicated management support to B & B establishments and proprietors. The posts are able to provide a regular and visible presence at B & B establishments and are able to respond quickly if necessary. Although at present, one of these posts is currently vacant.
- Whilst Welsh Government's Phase 2 Guidance requires temporary accommodation to be of a higher quality (including being self-contained) in order to create temporary 'homes' it has been necessary for the Council to continue using shared housing. The aim is to reduce the use of shared housing and eventually phase out it's complete use.
- Through the support of local RSL's, a greater proportion of social housing vacancies have been allocated to homeless people through the Monmouthshire Homesearch partnership. Higher quotas of lettings to homeless people will need to continue in the short-term in order to reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation and minimise their stays.
- Due to the numbers of people with complex and intensive needs, due to no suitable supported housing provision available in the County, at the start of the pandemic, the Council changed the use of the Council's emergency shared family accommodation to an interim complex needs facility with four units, facilitated by a concierge/security provider and Assertive Outreach providing support.
- Due to the lack of supported housing for those with complex and high needs, the Council has needed to commission concierge/security provision to help keep residents safe. This is not financially sustainable. The Council will need to continue with the provision of concierge/security but the aim is to phase out the use of security through the provision of fit for purpose housing support schemes.

6.6. Initial Socio-Economic/Equalities Impact Assessment
The aim of the Council is for this Plan to stimulate and deliver wider positive benefits that align with the Council's Future Generation Act responsibilities. The Plan will contribute to the well-being goals, particularly the prosperous Wales goal, it will have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics and on people suffering socio-economic disadvantage.

An overview of the Future Generation Assessment findings and conclusions include the following:

- **Age –** Through the provision of age or type specific accommodation and support, the Plan not only positively affects people of all ages threatened with or actually homeless from 16+. It will, therefore, benefit young people 16-24 together with children of families who may be assisted. For example, families with children are less likely to be displaced from their home communities and will have accommodation more conducive to learning.

- **Disability -** The Plan will mitigate against a lack of accessible homeless accommodation and will increase the availability of accessible accommodation. It will also benefit those with a mental health disability again through the provision of dedicated accommodation and increased support provision.

- **Socio-Economic Benefits -** a positive benefit of the Plan is that it will help to tackle and mitigate against socio economic disadvantage through the provision of safe and stable accommodation and tailored support. The Plan is fundamental to helping people transform their lives. In this regard:

  o There will be no need to sleep rough
  o Homeless prevention and support are priorities of this Plan. This includes financial inclusion support eg income maximisation, budgeting support, digital inclusion support, minimisation of outgoings, financial assistance (for example - to access private sector accommodation or address arrears etc) which mitigates against socio-econ0mic disadvantage.
  o A move to Temporary 'Homes' whereby the Plan will improve the quality and availability of good quality homes that are not the bare necessity and provide safety, security and stability that is positively conducive to children completing homework and studying, adults training and studying and adults accessing and maintaining employment. It's also similarly relevant to other areas of 'inclusion' such as access to broadband and financial services, such as insurance.

6.7. Other Considerations
In addition to Equalities and Socio/Economic benefits, this Plan also seeks to help mitigate against health inequalities (as per the intention of the Gwent PSB to work towards the principles of Marmot) and contribute towards the well-being goal of **A Healthier Wales.** This Plan promotes '**Good housing supports health and well-being.'** Homeless services in Monmouthshire contribute to positive health outcomes for homeless persons. This includes supporting:

  o Those with physical and mental health disabilities, particularly through more accessible and/or specialist accommodation and support.
  o There will be increased support for those with substance and alcohol abuse issues through more dedicated accommodation and specialist support provision.

In addition, the intention is for homelessness to be a consideration in Aneurin Bevan Health settings, whereby possible risks of homelessness are identified to facilitate early intervention.

7. Section 7 - Resource Planning
7.1. Existing Resource:

The table below provides an overview of the financial resources that were available to the Council over the last three years and how those resources have changed:

Table 24: Resources available to MCC over previous 3 years

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
MCC Housing Options Team Revenue				£912,300
MCC Housing Support Grant Revenue	£135,459	£135,459	£135,459	£135,459
Discretionary Housing Payments	£116,265	£238,856	£168,004	£116,656
WG & MCC Revenue Contribution to DHP	£60,000	£60,000	£81,246 + £60,000	£60,000 + £114,000
Housing Support Grant	£2,039,176	£2,039,176	£2,783,815	£2,783,815
Housing Prevention Grant transition to HSG	-	-	-	28,094
Discretionary Homeless Grant	-	-	-	£149,000
WG Hardship Grant	-	£844,668	£2,258,862	£60,000
Tenancy Hardship Grant	-	-	29,810	-
Leasing Scheme Wales	N/A	N/A	N/A	17,593
HIL				
Youth Support Grant	£155,594	£155 835	£152,291	123,811
WG Phase 2 Grant Funding	-	142,196	-	-

	2019/20	*2020/21*	*2021/22*	*2022/23*
Social Housing Grant	£3,801,884	£2,930,000	£7,522,704	£9,812,223
WG Phase 2 Grant Funding	-	£142,196	-	-
Transitional Capital Grant	-	-	-	£1,216,678

				(subject to approval)
(Payable to MHA)				
Leasing Scheme Wales	-	-	-	10,613
IHP (IHP)	£1,699,268 £1,391,546	N/A	N/A	N/A

7.2. Staffing
7.2.1. Current Homeless Staffing

The Council essentially delivers its homeless and homeless related services through Housing & Communities, Housing Support Grant and Youth Enterprise Teams. The following provides an overview of current staffing levels:

Table 25: Current staffing levels

	Housing & Communities	Housing Support Grant	Youth Enterprise
Strategic Homeless Transformation Co-Ordinator	1		
Housing Options Team	17 (includes 1 temporary post)	-	-
Strategy & Sustainable Living Team	4	-	-
Housing Support Grant Team		5	-
Housing Support Gateway Team		8.3	-
Compass	-	-	2

The following provides an overview of the Council's current staffing directly delivering or contributing towards homeless services. An action of this Plan is to further review the structure:

Housing & Communities

Housing & Communities Manager

Housing Options Team Manager

Strategic Homeless Transformation Co-Ordinator

Strategy & Sustainable Living Manager

Snr Housing Options Officer

Housing Options Officers x 3

Homeless Prevention Officers x 4

Snr Accommodation Officer

Accommodation Duty Officer

Accommodation Officers x 4

Accommodation Officer B & B (Temporary)

Administrative Assistant 0.5 x 2

Strategy & Policy Officer - Affordable Housing

Strategy & Policy Officer - Homelessness

Homeless Project Officer

Systems Administration & Performance Officer

Housing Support Grant

Flexible Funding Manager

Operations & Development Manager

Commissioning & Contracts Officer x 2

Housing Intervention Panel Co-Ordinator

Senior Housing Support Gateway Officer

Housing Support Gateway Officers x 5.3

Housing Support Universal Credit Officer x 2

Housing Support Gateway Assistant

Youth Enterprise

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Head of Economy, Employment & Skills      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
        │
        │    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
        ├────│ Youth Homeless Co-Ordinator      │
        │    └─────────────────────────────────┘
        │
        │    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
        └────│ Youth Homelessness Worker        │
             └─────────────────────────────────┘
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7.3. Key Homeless Services Outsourced or Delivered by Partner Agencies

The Council's substantive homeless staffing is complemented by the following services provided by partner agencies:

Table 26: Homeless Services delivered by partner agencies

Service	Type	Partner Agency	Funding
Bond Scheme	Generic	Pobl	HSG
Family Mediation Service	Family	Llamau	HSG
Tenancy Support Service	Generic	Pobl	HSG
Tenancy Support Service	Generic	Llamau	HSG
Assertive Outreach Service	Rough Sleeper	Llamau	HSG
Substance Misuse Assertive Outreach		GDAS	HSG
Temporary Accommodation & Resettlement Service	Crisis	Pobl	HSG
Monmouthshire Youth Outreach (MoYo)	Young People	Llamau	HSG
Family Intervention Service		Pobl	HSG
Young Persons Supported Accommodation	Young People	Pobl	HSG & Social Care Revenue
Criminal Offending Support Service	Ex-offenders	The Wallich & Torfaen CBC	HSG
MODAS	VAWDASV	Llamau	HSG
Crisis Project	VAWDASV	Cyfannol	HSG
Domestic Abuse Refuge	VAWDASV	Cyfannol	HSG
Domestic Abuse Group Activity	VAWDASV	Cyfannol	HSG
Target Hardening	VAWDASV	Care & Repair	HSG
Mental Health Intervention Worker	VAWEDASV	MIND	HSG
TASL including Welfare Rights	Mental Health	MIND	HSG
Housing First	Housing First	Pobl	HSG

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7.4. Possible Future Staffing Changes

To deliver this plan a need has been identified for the Council to recruit additional staffing to increase both capacity and resilience. The existing staffing structure has been evaluated, which identified and concluded the following staffing requirements:

7.4.1. Housing Options Team

- Due to the expansion and anticipated further expansion of the Council's portfolio of temporary accommodation and the need to identify more temporary accommodation together with the level of support needs of those accommodated, there is a further need to strengthen accommodated related management support. It is, therefore, proposed to create a second Senior Accommodation Officer post.
- Due to the level of demand for homeless accommodation the Council established an accommodation duty arrangement to facilitate placements. This has been extremely successful but there is a need to increase resilience to support staff well-being and facilitate holiday and possible sickness. It is, therefore, proposed to create a second Accommodation Duty Officer.
- Due to the importance of the Councils homeless evidence base and the need to maximise capacity through streamlining services and identifying efficiencies, there is a need for a dedicated resource to administer and develop the homeless and housing support data-base. A new Systems Administration & Performance Officer has been created. The post has been successfully appointed to and the successful candidate will start in January 2023
- To further strengthen homeless prevention capacity and streamline procedures, the benefit of reducing administrative requirements for Housing Options staff has been identified to help create additional prevention capacity. It is, therefore, proposed to appoint a First Contact Officer.
- Homelessness relating to Ukrainians has been identified as a risk. A temporary Housing Options Officer post is due to be appointed, dedicated to assisting Ukrainians.

7.4.2. Housing Strategy & Sustainable Living Team

- There is value in having a dedicated staffing resource to co-ordinate the delivery of this plan. Using Welsh Government Grant funding,

7.4.3. Housing Support Grant Team

- There is a need to provide additional staff management support relating to the increase in numbers in temporary accommodation and an increase in the support needs for those in temporary accommodation. Due to this operational priority, there is a need to ensure that is no detrimental impact on strategic responsibilities, ensuring contracts are delivered effectively and the Council is able to effectively plan and commission an on-going programme of support.

7.5. Priorities:

The implementation of this plan and achieving the strategic priorities of this plan will be subject to a number of key resources being identified or agreed. The following are the main resource priorities of the plan necessary to achieve the plans strategic priorities:

7.5.1. Strategic Priority 1: Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity

Resource Priority: To create additional homeless prevention capacity
Proposals
- Appoint a First Contact Officer to help create additional Housing Options Officer and prevention capacity. Cost £30,151 (MCC revenue) by 1st December 2022

- Appoint a Low Level Prevention Officer in the Housing Support Multi-Disciplinary Team. Cost £28,226 (MCC revenue) by 1st December 2022
- Appoint a Systems Administration & Performance Officer to maximise the functionality of the Locata data-base and to implement a new Rents system for temporary accommodation. Cost £30,151 by 1st December 2022.
- Appraise the benefits of possibly acquiring homeless prevention software. Cost approximately £12,000. By 31st December 2023.

7.5.2. **Strategic Priority 2 - Increase the <u>supply</u> of (good quality) affordable and <u>settled</u> accommodation**
Resource Priorities
- For the Council to make available £10m Housing borrowing headroom. (MCC Prudential borrowing).
- To make full use of available grants and funding streams
- To create a additional Housing Options Team capacity in respect of Monmouthshire Lettings.

Proposals
- By 1st April 2023, to increase the stock of Monmouthshire Letting service units by 10% from 99 units in November 2022.
- For the Council to bring back into use or convert existing assets for good quality homeless accommodation. Eg Cinderhill Street, Colemendy, Portskewett, Market Hall
- For the Council to purchase existing accommodation or properties for conversion
- For the Council to undertake an options appraisal establishing an in-house development and maintenance team to convert acquired/purchased accommodation.

7.5.3. **Strategic Priority 3 - Provide timely and effective <u>support</u> to <u>sustain</u> accommodation**
Resource Priorities
- To recycle existing funding <u>and</u> identify additional funding to facilitate the provision of additional support.
- To create additional Housing Support Grant team commissioning capacity
- Facilitate non-tenant ready applicants to access settled accommodation.

Proposal
- To phase out and eliminate the use of concierge/security
- Make permanent a temporary Housing Support Grant Project Officer and appoint a Contracts Monitoring & Review Officer by 1st December 2022. Cost approximately £56,000
- To ensure a comprehensive package of support is available to support 'non-tenant ready' applicants to access settled accommodation.

7.5.4. **Strategic Priority 4 - Maximising resources and benefits through well connected partnerships**

Resource Priority
- Jointly address barriers (such as viability) to potential development opportunities.
- Identify additional resources (financial and non-financial) to support this plan

Proposal
- To implement the Monmouthshire Strategic Housing Forum
- To participate in the Health, Social Care and Housing Partnership, which has adopted Rapid Re-Housing as one of its priorities.
- Using Welsh Government funding, appoint a Strategic Homeless Transformation Co-Ordinator. Cost approximately £60,000 pa until March 2025.
- To establish a joint approach/protocol (to include potential funding) between the Council and RSL's to sharing risk in respect of overcoming barriers to development opportunities.
- To develop a complex-needs supported housing scheme jointly with Social Care, All Age Disability and Mental Health Team and Aneurin Bevan Health Board. This will have a cost benefit of enabling the Council to reduce the use of concierge/security.

7.6. Resource Plan:

The table below provides an overview of anticipated financial resources for the duration of this plan:

Table 27: Anticipated financial resources for RRH 2022-2027

	2022/23	**2023/24**	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**
MCC Options Team Revenue	912,300	912,300	912,300	912,300	912,300
MCC Housing Support Grant Revenue	£135,459	£135,459	£135,459	£135,459	£135,459
MCC Discretionary Housing Payments Revenue Contribution	114,000	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Discretionary Housing Payments	176,656	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Housing Support Grant, including HPG Transition	£2,811,909	2,856,748	2,856,748	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Homeless Prevention Grant	149,000	149,325	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Homeless – No One Left Out Approach Grant	509,403	624,236	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Discretionary Homeless Grant	149,325	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Strategic Co-Ordinator Grant	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	-	-
Youth Support Grant	123,811	123,811	123,811	-	-
Children's Services Revenue Contribution to HSG	£110,181	£110,181	£110,181	£110,181	£110,181

Leasing Scheme Wales	17,593	45,620	52,345	82,700	106,050

	2022/23	**2023/24**	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**
Social Housing Grant	£9,812,223	£10,793,445	£10,629,908	TBC	TBC
Transitional Capital Grant (MHA)	TBC	Subject to potential application	-	-	-
Optimised Retrofit Grant (MHA)	TBC	Subject to potential application	Subject to potential application	Subject to potential application	Subject to potential application
MCC Capital Borrowing Headroom	£2,000,000	Balance c/f	Balance c/f	Balance c/f	Balance c/f
S106 Contributions	£814,331	Balance c/f + TBC	Balance c/f + TBC	Balance c/f + TBC	Balance c/f + TBC
Housing with Care Fund	-	Subject to potential application	Subject to potential application	Subject to potential application	Subject to potential application
Leasing Scheme Wales	10,613	12,450	33,575	89,500	86,750