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Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

Dydd Mawrth, 11 Gorffennaf 2023

Hysbysiad a Gyfarfod :

Pwyllgor Craffu Pobl

**Dydd Mercher, 19eg Gorffennaf, 2023 at 10.00 am,
County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance**

Nodwch y cynhelir rhag gyfarfod 30 munud cyn dechrau'r cyfarfod ar gyfer aelodau'r pwyllgor

AGENDA

Rhif yr Eitem	Eitem	Tudalen nau
1.	Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb	
2.	Datganiadau o Fuddiant	
3.	Fforwm Agored i'r Cyhoedd	
4.	Darpariaeth Seibiant i oedolion sydd ag anableddau dysgu NODWCH FOD YR EITEM HON YN DEBYGOL O GAEL EI GOHIRIO I GYFARFOD O'R PWYLLGOR YN Y DYFODOL AC NA CHAIFF EI THRAFOD HEDDIW. I gynnal craffu cyn penderfynu ar gynigion sy'n ymwneud â'r Ddarpariaeth Seibiant	1 - 64
5.	Asesiad Anghenion Sipsiwn a Theithwyr Cynnal gwaith craffu cyn penderfynu ar gynigion, cyn penderfyniad y Cabinet	65 - 108
6.	Nodi dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf fel 5ed Hydref 2023	
7.	Polisi Trafnidiaeth o'r Cartref i'r Ysgol Cynnal gwaith craffu cyn penderfynu ar gynigion, cyn penderfyniad y Cabinet	109 - 132

Paul Matthews

Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

MAE CYFANSODDIAD Y PWYLLGOR FEL A GANLYN:

County Councillor Fay Bromfield, Llangybi Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor John Crook, Magor East with Undy;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Christopher Edwards, St. Kingsmark;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Simon Howarth, Llanelly Hill;, Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones, Raglan;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell, Pen Y Fal;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Sue Riley, Bulwark and Thornwell;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Maria Stevens, Severn;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong, Caldicot Cross;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Frances Taylor, Magor West;, Independent Group
County Councillor Sara Burch, Cantref;, Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Richard John, Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jane Lucas, Osbaston;, Welsh Conservative Party

Gwybodaeth I'r Cyhoedd

Mynediad i gopiâu papur o agendâu ac adroddiadau

Gellir darparu copi o'r agenda hwn ac adroddiadau perthnasol i aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n mynychu cyfarfod drwy ofyn am gopi gan Gwasanaethau Democrataidd ar 01633 644219. Dylid nodi fod yn rhaid i ni dderbyn 24 awr o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod er mwyn darparu copi caled o'r agenda hwn i chi.

Edrych ar y cyfarfod ar-lein

Gellir gweld y cyfarfod ar-lein yn fyw neu'n dilyn y cyfarfod drwy fynd i www.monmouthshire.gov.uk neu drwy ymweld â'n tudalen Youtube drwy chwilio am MonmouthshireCC. Drwy fynd i mewn i'r ystafell gyfarfod, fel aelod o'r cyhoedd neu i gymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod, rydych yn caniatáu i gael eich ffilmio ac i ddefnydd posibl y delweddau a'r recordiadau sain hynny gan y Cyngor.

Y Gymraeg Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu cyfraniadau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Gofynnwn gyda dyledus barch i chi roi 5 diwrnod o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod os dymunwch siarad yn Gymraeg fel y gallwn ddarparu ar gyfer eich anghenion.

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

i ddod yn sir ddi-garbon, gan gefnogi lles, iechyd ac urddas i bawb ar bob cam o'u bywydau.

Amcanion rydym yn gweithio tuag atynt

- Lle teg i fyw lle mae effeithiau anghydraddoldeb a thlodi wedi'u lleihau;
- Lle gwyrdd i fyw a gweithio gyda llai o allyriadau carbon a gwneud cyfraniad cadarnhaol at fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng yn yr hinsawdd a natur;
- Lle ffyniannus ac uchelgeisiol, lle mae canol trefi bywiog a lle gall busnesau dyfu a datblygu;
- Lle diogel i fyw lle mae gan bobl gartref maen nhw'n teimlo'n ddiogel ynddo;
- Lle cysylltiedig lle mae pobl yn teimlo'n rhan o gymuned ac yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi;
- Lle dysgu lle mae pawb yn cael cyfle i gyrraedd eu potensial.

Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.
- **Caredigrwydd** – Byddwn yn dangos caredigrwydd i bawb yr ydym yn gweithio gyda nhw, gan roi pwysigrwydd perthnasoedd a'r cysylltiadau sydd gennym â'n gilydd wrth wraidd pob rhyngweithio.

Canllaw Cwestiynau Craffu Sir Fynwy

Rôl y Cyn-gyfarfod

1. Pam mae'r Pwyllgor yn craffu ar hyn? (cefndir, materion allweddol)
2. Beth yw rôl y Pwyllgor a pha ganlyniad mae'r Aelodau am ei gyflawni?
3. A oes digon o wybodaeth i gyflawni hyn? Os nad oes, pwy allai ddarparu hyn?
 - Cytuno ar y drefn holi a pha Aelodau fydd yn arwain
 - Cytuno ar gwestiynau i swyddogion a chwestiynau i Aelod y Cabinet

Cwestiynau'r Cyfarfod

Craffu ar Berfformiad

1. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â'r blynyddoedd blaenorol? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
2. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â chynghorau eraill/darparwyr gwasanaethau eraill? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
3. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â thargedau gosodedig? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
4. Sut cafodd targedau perfformiad eu gosod? Ydyn nhw'n ddigon heriol/realistig?
5. Sut mae defnyddwyr gwasanaethau/y cyhoedd/partneriaid yn gweld perfformiad y gwasanaeth?
6. A fu unrhyw awdid ac archwiliadau diweddar? Beth oedd y canfyddiadau?
7. Sut mae'r gwasanaeth yn cyfrannu at wireddu amcanion corfforaethol?
8. A yw gwelliant/dirywiad mewn perfformiad yn gysylltiedig i gynnydd/ostyngiad mewn adnodd?
Pa gapasiti sydd yna i wella?

Craffu ar Bolisi

1. Ar bwy mae'r polisi yn effeithio ~ yn uniongyrchol ac yn anuniongyrchol? Pwy fydd yn elwa fwyaf/leiaf?
2. Beth yw barn defnyddwyr gwasanaeth /rhanddeiliaid? Pa ymgynghoriad gafodd ei gyflawni? A wnaeth y broses ymgynghori gydymffurfio ag Egwyddorion Gunning? A yw rhanddeiliaid yn credu y bydd yn sicrhau'r canlyniad a ddymunir?
3. Beth yw barn y gymuned gyfan – safbwynt y 'trethdalwr'?
4. Pa ddulliau a ddefnyddiwyd i ymgynghori â'r rhanddeiliaid? A oedd y broses yn galluogi pawb â chyfran i ddweud eu dweud?
5. Pa ymarfer ac opsiynau sydd wedi eu hystyried wrth ddatblygu/adolygu'r polisi hwn? Pa dystiolaeth sydd i hysbysu beth sy'n gweithio? A yw'r polisi yn ymwneud â maes lle mae diffyg ymchwil cyhoeddedig neu dystiolaeth arall?
6. A yw'r polisi'n ymwneud â maes lle ceir anhydraddoldebau hysbys?
7. A yw'r polisi hwn yn cyd-fynd â'n hamcanion corfforaethol, fel y'u diffinnir yn ein cynllun corfforaethol? A yw'n cadw at ein Safonau Iaith Gymraeg?
8. A gafodd yr holl ddatblygu cynaliadwy, y goblygiadau cydraddoldeb a diogelu perthnasol eu hystyried?

Er enghraifft, beth yw'r gweithdrefnau sydd angen bod ar waith i amddiffyn plant?

9. Faint fydd y gost hon i'w gweithredu a pha ffynhonnell ariannu sydd wedi'i nodi?

10. Sut fydd perfformiad y polisi yn cael ei weithredu a'r effaith yn cael ei gwerthuso?

Cwestiynau Cyffredinol:

Grymuso Cymunedau

- Sut ydym ni'n cynnwys cymunedau lleol a'u grymuso i ddylunio a darparu gwasanaethau i gyd-fynd ag angen lleol?
- A ydym ni'n cael trafodaethau rheolaidd gyda chymunedau am flaenoriaethau'r gwasanaeth a pha lefel o wasanaeth y gall y cyngor fforddio ei ddarparu yn y dyfodol?
- A yw'r gwasanaeth yn gweithio gyda dinasyddion i egluro rôl gwahanol bartneriaid wrth ddarparu gwasanaeth a rheoli disgwyliadau?
- A oes fframwaith a phroses gymesur ar waith ar gyfer asesu perfformiad ar y cyd, gan gynnwys o safbwynt dinesydd, ac a oes gennych chi drefniadau atebolrwydd i gefnogi hyn?
- A oes Asesiad Effaith Cydraddoldeb wedi'i gynnal? Os felly a all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet /Uwch Swyddogion roi copïau i'r Aelodau ac eglurhad manwl o'r Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb (EQIA) a gynhaliwyd mewn perthynas â'r cynigion hyn?
- A all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet/Uwch Swyddogion sicrhau aelodau bod y cynigion hyn yn cydymffurfio â deddfwriaeth Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol? A yw'r cynigion yn cydymffurfio â Chynllun Cydraddoldeb Strategol yr Awdurdod Lleol?

Galwadau'r Gwasanaeth

- Sut fydd newid polisi a deddfwriaeth yn effeithio ar y ffordd mae'r cyngor yn gweithredu?
- A ydym ni wedi ystyried demograffeg ein cyngor a sut bydd hyn yn effeithio ar ddarparu gwasanaethau a chyllid yn y dyfodol?
- A ydych chi wedi adnabod ac ystyried y tueddiadau tymor hir a allai effeithio ar eich maes gwasanaeth, pa effaith allai'r tueddiadau hyn ei chael ar eich gwasanaeth/allai eich gwasanaeth ei gael ar y tueddiadau hyn, a beth sy'n cael ei wneud mewn ymateb?

Cynllunio Ariannol

- A oes gennym ni gynlluniau ariannol canolig a hirdymor cadarn yn eu lle?
- A ydym ni'n cysylltu cyllidebau â chynlluniau a chanlyniadau ac adrodd yn effeithiol ar y rhain?

Gwneud arbedion a chynhyrchu incwm

- A oes gennym ni'r strwythurau cywir ar waith i sicrhau bod ein dulliau effeithlonrwydd, gwelliant a thrawsnewid yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd i sicrhau'r arbedion mwyaf posibl?

- Sut ydym ni'n gwneud y mwyaf o incwm? A ydym ni wedi cymharu polisiau eraill y cyngor i sicrhau'r incwm mwyaf posibl ac wedi ystyried yn llawn y goblygiadau ar ddefnyddwyr gwasanaeth?

- A oes gennym ni gynllun gweithlu sy'n ystyried capasiti, costau, a sgiliau'r gweithlu gwirioneddol yn erbyn y gweithlu a ddymunir?

Cwestiynau i'w gofyn o fewn blwyddyn i'r penderfyniad:

- A gafodd canlyniadau arfaethedig y cynnig eu cyflawni neu a oedd canlyniadau eraill?
- A oedd yr effeithiau wedi'u cyfyngu i'r grŵp yr oeddech chi ar y dechrau yn meddwl fyddai wedi cael ei effeithio h.y. pobl hŷn, neu a gafodd eraill eu heffeithio e.e. pobl ag anabledau, rhieni â phlant ifanc?
- A yw'r penderfyniad yn dal i fod y penderfyniad cywir neu a oes angen gwneud addasiadau?

Cwestiynau i'r Pwyllgor ar ddiwedd y cyfarfod ...

A oes gennym ni'r wybodaeth angenrheidiol i ffurfio casgliadau/i wneud argymhellion i'r pwyllgor gwaith, cyngor, partneriaid eraill? Os nad oes, a oes angen i ni:

- (i) Ymchwilio i'r mater yn fwy manwl?
- (ii) Gael rhagor o wybodaeth gan dystion eraill - Aelod o'r Bwrdd Gweithredol, arbenigwr annibynnol, aelodau o'r gymuned, defnyddwyr gwasanaeth, cyrff rheoleiddio...

Cytuno ar gamau pellach sydd i'w cymryd o fewn amserlen/adroddiad monitro yn y dyfodol.

**SUBJECT: THE REVIEW OF THE RESPITE OPPORTUNITIES SERVICE WITH
RECOMMENDATIONS**

MEETING: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 19th July 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To present the findings of the Respite Opportunities Service review, review recommendations, and the feedback received from people using the service for consideration by the People Scrutiny Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That the People Scrutiny Committee considers the findings of the Respite Opportunities Service review, the review recommendations, feedback received, and offers views to the Executive.

3. BACKGROUND:

3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to meet the care and support needs of carers, in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, including the respite needs of carers of people with a learning disability. In discharging this duty, we also seek to ensure the lives of people receiving respite support are enriched by the opportunities available to them.

3.2 In order to meet its statutory duty and enrich the lives of people receiving respite, the Monmouthshire Respite Opportunities Service was created. It offers a range of respite options for adults with learning disabilities, including short breaks/supported holidays, shared lives, direct payments and residential respite. It provides a bespoke, person-centred approach to respite.

3.3 The service has been successfully delivering this model since 2011 but the demand and type of services being used have changed considerably. A review has been undertaken between November 2022 and May 2023 to identify how best the service can be developed for the future.

3.4 When the review began 30 people were identified as eligible for support; 12% of all adults with a learning disability supported by the Directorate. In addition, a further 12 young people coming through transition were identified who might be eligible at 18.

4. THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE RESPITE OPPORTUNITIES SERVICE

4.1 Undertaking the review of the Respite Opportunities Service has allowed us to develop a future vision for the development of respite services based on changing patterns of demand and our understanding of what is important to people.

The review highlighted some key changes and challenges including:

- More people are seeking to use short breaks/supported holidays, shared lives and direct payments.
- The considerably decreased demand for the residential respite resulting in a reduction in demand Budden Crescent (See section 5.5 for detail)
- A need to expand and enhance the range of short breaks/supported holidays on offer.

To respond to these changes, we are seeking to reprofile the service to ensure it continues to meet the needs of people by offering 5 types of respite support.

4.2. Specific areas for development will include:

1. Expanding short breaks/supported holidays to enable greater choice and provide support for people who are wheelchair users or have higher level care needs.
2. Refocussing the residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes in neighbouring counties and cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent.
3. Extending the availability of Shared Lives support to specifically enable people who are wheelchair users or have higher level care needs to access this option.
4. Developing a respite at home option for people who would prefer to remain at home when their family are away.
5. Promoting and increasing the uptake of Direct Payments for respite.
6. Developing a range of robust emergency respite options.

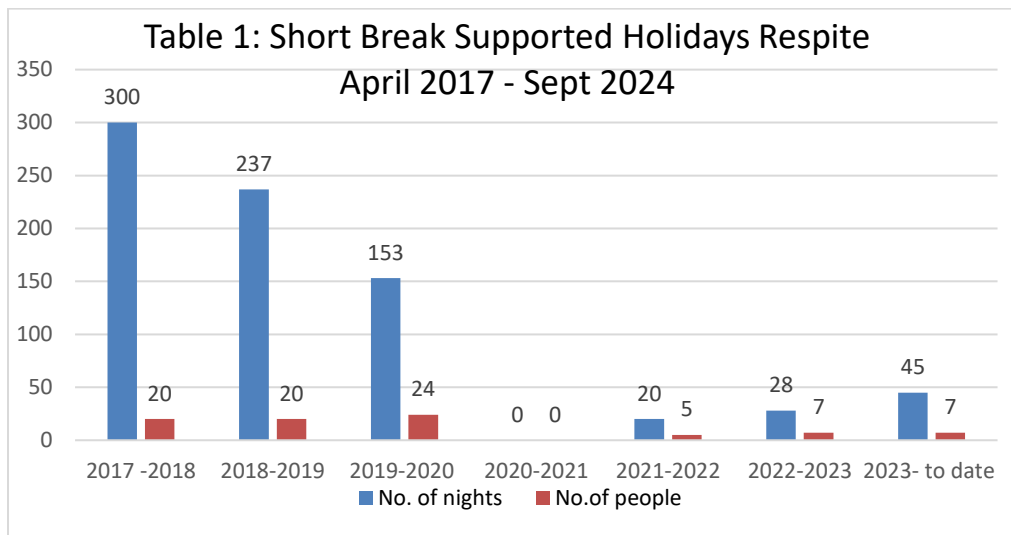
4.3 The ethos of the service will remain as before - a high quality flexible respite service that offers choice, meets people's respite needs and supports individual outcomes. People will continue to have access to the full range of respite support options. Residential respite will be offered through a range of appropriate services in neighbouring local authorities, including Newport and Blaenau-Gwent. Social workers will work with people and their families to secure the most appropriate residential respite placement to meet their needs.

5. KEY ISSUES - THE REVIEW FINDINGS

5.1 The review report provides a comprehensive assessment of the service (Appendix 1) with detailed findings of each of the service's 4 current options. It also identifies additional options which require development in the future. The key findings are summarised below:

5.2 Short Break/Supported Holidays

5.2.1 When this option was first offered in 2011 it was very much uncharted territory for all concerned. By 2020 it was a much used and valued form of respite; with over 2/3rds of people having a short break/supported holiday. The emergence of the pandemic in March 2020 had a significant impact upon supported holidays. A slow take up of this option has begun, but not yet at its pre-pandemic level. See table 1 below:



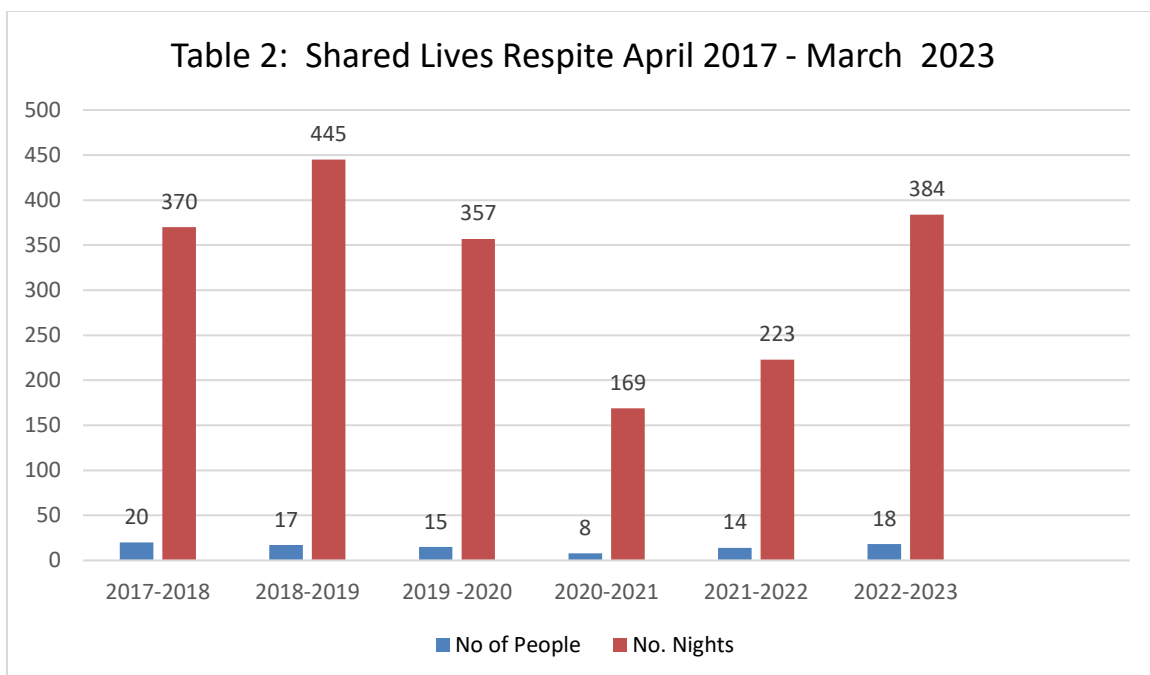
5.2.2 A variety of supported holiday providers had been sourced and we are able to offer a selection of short break holidays, typically around 4 days.

5.2.3 Availability of short breaks/supported holidays for people who are wheelchair users and or have high level support needs has been challenging. Comments from the first engagement exercise include a request for more investment to increase opportunities.

5.3 Shared Lives

5.3.1 Shared Lives has seen consistent growth in its use. It is clearly a valued and attractive option for people which offers flexible respite within a family setting. Some Shared Lives carers provide emergency as well as planned support, which is particularly valuable. There is limited availability of shared lives carers who can offer respite to people who use a wheelchair.

5.3.2 Shared Lives has seen the least impact in terms of the pandemic. Support continued to during 2020/2021 albeit at a reduced level but has now returned to previous levels.

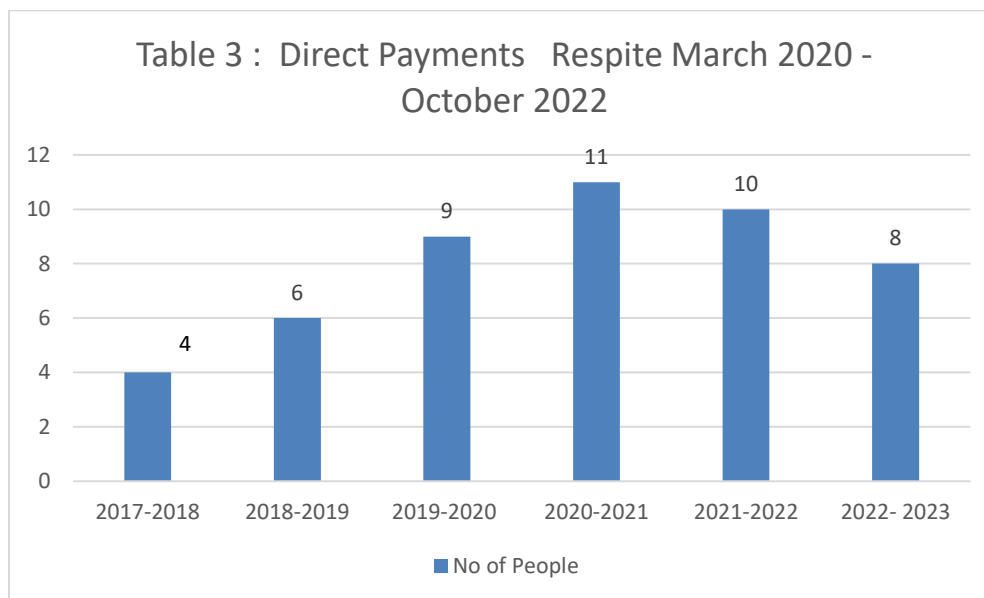


5.3.3 The Shared Lives service is operated via the Gwent wide South East Wales scheme. People receiving report are matched with host carers from anywhere in the areas and are not restricted to their local authority footprint.

5.3.4 36% of responses from the first engagement exercise were from people who currently use or had recently used Shared Lives and feedback was universally very positive.

5.4 Direct Payments

5.4.1 The take up of Direct Payments for respite support has increased since 2017 and is a valued option. See table 3 below:



5.4.2 People often use it for very short periods of time e.g. 1 or 2 days and this enables people to dovetail their support to best fit their lives.

5.4.3 The costs of a Direct Payment vary as they are calculated based on the person's needs and circumstances.

5.5 Residential Respite

5.5.1 It is a key component of the service and was used the most until 2017/2018. The majority of residential respite has been provided at Budden Crescent in Caldicot, run by Monmouthshire County Council, though some people have chosen to access other services residential respite care homes outside the county.

5.5.2 The numbers using Budden Crescent have been reducing since 2018. More families are choosing to use other respite options as they became available, particularly among younger people. Demand has also reduced due to previous users moving into a care home and supported living settings or moving out of the county.

5.5.3 Budden Crescent has been impacted the most by the reduced demand. 13 people received respite at the home in 2019. There are now 8 people who have been assessed as requiring for residential respite:

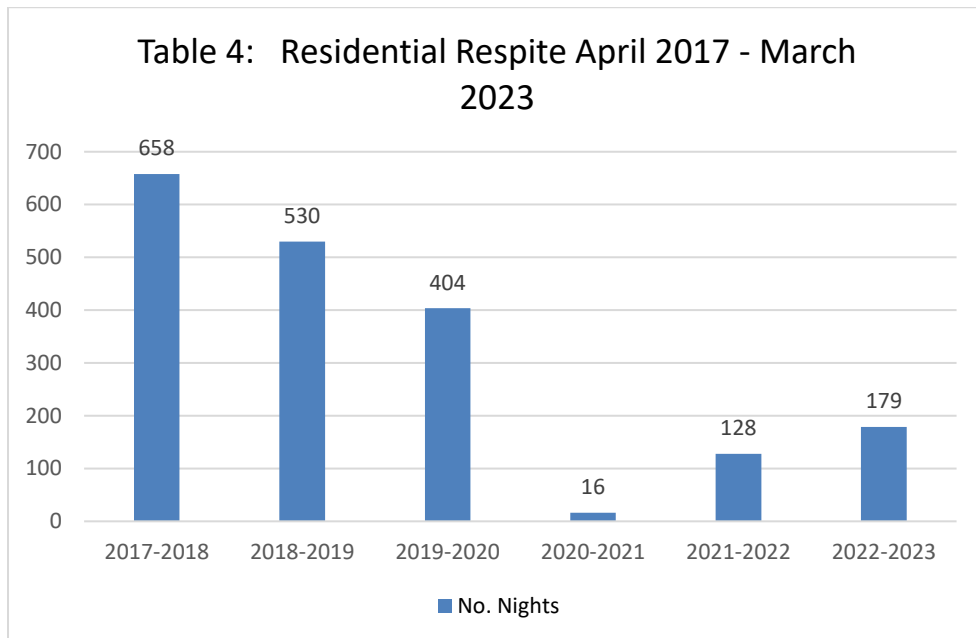
- 2 are receiving residential respite and are satisfied with their current support.
- 2 are receiving residential respite but would prefer to use Budden Crescent if available.

- 4 are not currently receiving residential respite and have confirmed Budden Crescent is the only option they will consider.

5.5.4 In early April 2020 Budden Crescent was temporarily closed due to the pandemic. From September 2021 to June 2022, the building was used for an emergency Children’s Services placement. Since then, the service has remained temporarily closed while the review is undertaken and the future need for support confirmed.

5.5.5 While Budden Crescent has been temporarily closed, other options have been offered to people including residential respite in alternative facilities. During 2020-2021, demand was low with between 3-4 people requesting residential respite. 50% chose to access an alternative residential option.

5.5.6 From 2021 residential demand increased, the majority of support was provided at Centrica Lodge in Newport. This interim arrangement with Newport City Council remains in place while the review is undertaken. Indications are that it would be open to entering into a longer-term arrangement. Numbers of people receiving residential respite has started to grow since 2021. See table 4.



5.5.7 There are now 8 people who require residential respite support; 4 currently receive their support from homes in Blaenau Gwent and Newport. The remaining 4 people have declined any alternative residential respite service to Budden Crescent. Each person has an allocated social worker, and all are receiving other support services including day services and support at home. Social workers continue to explore and offer alternative respite options to the people and their families.

5.5.8 A prediction of the demand for residential respite at Budden Crescent has been undertaken, based on the 6 people who either prefer Budden Crescent or have stated it’s the only option they will consider. The estimate of their future requirements is a total of 182 nights per year, approximately 25% of the home’s capacity.

5.5.9 Future predictions suggest a 54.5% increase in the number of people in Monmouthshire with a learning disability by 2035. If this is applied to the existing number of people who prefer to use Budden Crescent, then that would equate to an increase from 6 to 9. While statistically significant this would only increase the overall projection of nights to 273 (37% of capacity).

5.6 Respite at Home

- 5.6.1 During Covid residential respite was a higher risk option, alternative options were found including providing respite support into the person's family home. This happened occasionally and proved very successful for the people and families receiving it.
- 5.6.2 Expanding the service to include respite at home would provide another option which could flexibly adapt to the needs of people.

5.7 Emergency Respite

- 5.7.1 Emergency respite is sometimes required at short notice when family carers are unwell or unable to provide their usual care due to other reasons. Typically for short periods of time though occasionally this may be longer where individual circumstances require it.
- 5.7.2 Historically emergency respite has mainly been provided at Budden Crescent with Shared Lives occasionally. Since March 2020 demand has reduced, emergency respite has been via Shared Lives, respite at home and residential facilities including Centrica Lodge.
- 5.7.3 There will always be a need for emergency respite and the service will need to be able to meet this need flexibly and effectively.

6. CONSULTATION

People and families

- 6.1 There have been two engagement exercises with people who use the service and their families during the review process. The first exercise took place in November 2022 when people were asked their views on the findings from the review to date. The second exercise took place in March 2023 for a 5-week period. People and families were provided with the final draft review report and were asked for their views on the draft recommendations.
- 6.2 First phase engagement process: There was a low engagement rate with only 26% (11) of people and families invited, taking part.
- 6.3 Second phase engagement: All 31 people identified as receiving support and 12 all young people eligible for support in the future were contacted. Packs were provided containing the review report, the review summary and paper questionnaire (all in standard English and Easy Read) and a link to an online questionnaire.
- 6.4 Participation levels in the second phase were considerably higher and are summarised below (Appendix 2 Engagement Summary):
- Direct contact was made with 100% of the people, this contact included home visits, phone calls, emails, letters, and voicemails.
 - Initial contact was made in March by phone and letter.
 - Follow up phone calls were made in April to those who hadn't yet responded,
 - Direct contact was made with 77% (33 people)
 - Responses to the review and recommendations were received from 58% people (18 questionnaires and 7 alternative form of feedback).

- 6.5 The percentage responses given in the following section relate to only those provided via the questionnaire (18).
- 6.6 There was overall support for 6 of the 8 recommendations (1,2,5,6,7 +8); 56% - 89% of respondents either agreed or somewhat agreed.
- 6.7 Recommendations 3 and 4 did not receive overall support:
- Recommendation 3: Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties.
 - 39% (7) of respondents either agreed or somewhat agreed.
 - 28% (5) either disagreed or somewhat disagreed.
 - 33% (6) neither agreed nor disagreed.
 - Recommendation 4: Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent received the lowest support of all:
 - 6% (1) of respondents either agreed or somewhat agreed.
 - 61% (11) either disagreed or somewhat disagreed.
 - 33% (6) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 6.8 For some respondents there is no alternative to the safety, comfort, and local nature of Budden Crescent. People commented warmly of their experiences at this service. Given the importance of this recommendation, it is worth considering in the wider context of who were consulted as part of the respite review:
- 33% people have stated they disagree with this recommendation.
 - 2% have said they agree saying it costs too much for not many.
 - 14% recorded a response of neither agree or disagree.
 - 51% people did not respond at all to this recommendation (total of 43)
- 6.9 Respondents were also able to provide narrative comments against each recommendation and more general feedback. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the questionnaire responses and feedback received. The narrative themes within the feedback has been collated below:
- Equality of opportunity for all types of respite service regardless of disability or needs. Including Shared Lives and Short Break/Supported Holidays for people who use wheelchairs.
 - Short break/Supported holidays need more variety, choice and availability.
 - Respite opportunities should where possible be in county, and where people did want or need to go out of county, they should not be discriminated against.
 - Any change should be driven by want and need.
 - Budden Crescent should not be closed if people still want and need it.
 - A respite at home service should be developed for those who want it.
 - Direct Payments needs to be more easily accessible and more flexible in their use.
 - Emergency respite is a critical need. This should be in county if possible.

Budden Crescent team

- 6.10 In March 2023 Colleagues at Budden Crescent were asked for their views on the Respite Opportunities Service review report. A written feedback response was provided on behalf of the team as well as 6 emails directly from individual colleagues. Feedback was largely split in to two overarching topics:

1) The future of Budden Crescent and Respite Opportunities.

The main themes within the feedback are:

- Previous changes to respite allocation and booking systems (based on need) have caused stress on families, particularly when combined with reduction of day services; leading to a reduction in the amount of care some people can access.
- Querying whether numbers in the report truly represent use of Budden Crescent when they feel people have been signposted to other services since 2020, and if this is the case are other respite offers really peoples preferred options or is it that Budden Crescent is not open so there is no other choice.
- They hope that any new service will maintain the values and ethos of Budden Crescent; 'familiarity, comfort and control'.
- Is it really a new approach if one residential respite is being substituted by another?
- The review was not carried out independently, so there are concerns about impartiality.
- If some of this is cost saving measures, this should be overtly mentioned in the report including comparative cost of other options.
- Despite their concerns they do see that Budden Crescent is no longer a viable option.
- Monmouthshire County Council has missed an opportunity to work collaboratively with the team to develop a more modern and financially robust service. 'We believe that our insights and experience could have been an asset in the development of a more sustainable and efficient service.'

2) Colleague experiences whilst Budden has been temporarily closed.

The main themes within the feedback are:

- Colleagues expressed a feeling of being treated unfairly and feeling poorly supported and informed during this time of transition, with feelings of uncertainty about their futures.
- There is a feeling of being let down by Monmouthshire Council and no longer feeling proud of their roles.
- There is a desire to move forward with a more open and transparent environment, with a dialogue between staff and senior managers.

6.11 The feedback from Budden Crescent colleagues is appreciated. The comments in respect of the future of Budden Crescent and the Respite Opportunities have been considered in developing the final recommendations for the future of the service.

6.12 Engagement and consultation with staff has taken place throughout but managers of the service note the comments around staff members feeling poorly informed and will address this with the team as a priority.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. The review draws conclusions for each existing respite options and makes 9 recommendations for the future development of the service. This is summarised in this section below.

7.2 Short Break/Supported Holidays

- 7.2.1 As part of the review, feedback from people and families using the service was gathered in two separate engagement exercises. Feedback was very positive in respect of short break supported holidays. In the initial exercise in November 2022 all respondents who use this option said they are really satisfied with this option.
- 7.2.2 Further expanding and developing this option in the future, will ensure people continue to have an opportunity to receive their respite through a short break/supported holiday, including those who use a wheelchair or have higher support levels.
- 7.2.3 Whilst some bespoke holiday packages have been arranged, generally this remains an area for development. It is very much a specialist area and there are a limited number of operators offering holidays. A number of operators have pulled out of the market since Covid, mainly not for profit providers which has resulted in very limited choice and higher costs.
- 7.2.4 Securing support in the future will be challenging in terms of supply but equally in ensuring costs are financially sustainable.
- 7.2.5 Two recommendations are made in respect of this options. 78% (14) of people who responded to the second engagement questionnaire agreed or somewhat agreed with both recommendations (Appendix 2).

7.3 Shared Lives

- 7.3.1 Shared Lives support is both effective and efficient and is valued by the people who use it. Costs associated with this option are the lowest as carer pay rates are agreed across the scheme.
- 7.3.2 The lack of availability of Shared Lives carers with suitably adapted homes to support wheelchair users and people with higher level support needs has been a key issue for some time. MCC will need to work with its SEWAP partners to recruit appropriate carers and create solutions to provide suitable adapted accommodation.
- 7.3.3 It would benefit from expansion to improve the availability of short notice or emergency support. This is rarely required but would bring added security and robustness.
- 7.3.4 One recommendation is made (Recommendation 5) to extend the availability of support to enable people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs. 78% (14) of people who responded to the second engagement questionnaire agreed or somewhat agreed with the recommendation.

7.4 Direct Payments

- 7.4.1 This option is often more attractive to younger people and their families, many of whom prefer this to the more traditional residential respite offer. It works well for those who want a fully flexible, self-managed option. Feedback from current users is they are happy with the service.
- 7.4.2 Feedback from people is that for some, managing their own money and options would not be achievable or desirable.

- 7.4.3 Further work is underway across the Gwent Region to collaborate on the promotion and delivery of Direct Payments will bring benefits in the future and will ensure that this valuable option is promoted and used.
- 7.4.4 A more robust process for calculating Direct Payment allocations needs to be developed. Work has begun to develop an allocation process for all of the respite options allocations which will bring greater equity for those using the service.
- 7.4.5 The review makes one recommendation (Recommendation 7) which is to promote and increase the uptake of Direct Payments for people who need respite. 56% (10) of people who responded to the second engagement questionnaire agreed or somewhat agreed with the recommendation.

7.5 Residential Respite

- 7.5.1 There has been a reduction in demand over the last 5 years which has resulted in the capacity at Budden Crescent being in excess of what is required to meet current demand. The current demand, and future demand projections, all indicate that a service the size of Budden Crescent is no longer required to meet the needs of people requiring a residential respite service.
- 7.5.2 Budden Crescent has always been a highly valued service. Many people have used it for many years and have built trusted relationships with the team.
- 7.5.3 Residential respite can be delivered through existing alternative provision in neighbouring counties. Feedback from 11% (2) of respondents stated they want in county residential respite.
- 7.5.4 Residential respite is a crucial component of the respite service and should be provided in a way which is appropriate and proportionate to demand. It is generally the highest cost form of respite support, and it needs to be provided in the most cost-effective way.
- 7.5.5 The reviews makes 2 recommendations relating to the future of residential respite:
- Recommendation 3. Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties.
 - Recommendation 4. Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent.
- 7.5.6 Recommendations 3 and 4 did not receive overall support from respondents. 39% (7) of respondents agreed with recommendation 3 and only 6% (1) agreed with recommendation 4. 33% (6) of respondents for each of these recommendations neither agreed nor disagreed (Appendix 2).
- 7.5.7 The implementation of both recommendations will ensure that residential respite is provided for people using a range of different residential facilities to meet their needs.
- 7.5.8 There will be a range of respite options available which can meet the residential respite needs of the people who have indicated they will only consider respite at Budden Crescent. Social workers will continue to offer the available respite options to the families, including other available residential facilities which can appropriately meet their needs. It is hoped that through on-going social work support families feel able to access respite support in the future.

7.5.9 An options appraisal was undertaken of Recommendation 4 which identified Option C as the preferred option. (Appendix 4)

7.6 Respite at Home

7.6.1 During Covid alternative options to residential respite were found including providing respite support into the person's family home. This happened occasionally and proved very successful for the people and families receiving it.

7.6.2 Feedback from the 2nd engagement exercise was positive with 89% (16) of respondents either agreeing or somewhat agreeing with recommendation 6 to expanding the service to include respite at home would provide another option which could flexibly adapt to the needs of people.

7.7 Emergency Respite

7.7.1 Since March 2020 demand for this has reduced. When needed emergency respite has been provided via Shared Lives, respite at home and residential facilities including Centrica Lodge.

7.7.2 There will always be a need for emergency respite and the service will need to be able to meet this need flexibly and effectively. A recommendation regarding developing this is made (8).

7.7.3 83% (15) of people who responded to the second engagement questionnaire either agreed or somewhat agreed with the recommendation. Respondents spoke of the stress that comes from becoming unwell when you are a carer, prioritising others needs over your own health due to lack of support. Respondents described this as an 'urgent' and 'critical need'.

8. THE RECOMMENDATIONS:

8.1 There are 8 recommendations for the future development of the service:

1. Expand the range of supported holiday opportunities to enable greater choice to match people's interests and needs
2. Create holiday opportunities for people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs.
3. Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties.
4. Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent.
5. Extend the availability of Shared Lives support to specifically enable people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs
6. Develop a respite at home option for people who would prefer to remain at home when their family are away.
7. Promote and increase the uptake of Direct Payments for people who need respite.
8. Develop a range of robust emergency respite options including Shared Lives, residential and respite at home.

9. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

9.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3.

9.2 A summary from Section 8 of the Integrated Impact Assessment identifying the significant positive and negative impacts is detailed below.

Positive Impacts:

- The recommendations will ensure that people and their families have access to a range of different respite options which can best meet their needs and aspirations. Providing greater voice, choice, and control.
- The recommendations to enhance Short Break/Supported Holidays and Shared Lives to increase access for people who use wheelchairs and will positively impact their choice and experience ensuring equality of access.
- They will provide a fit for purpose respite service, which is sustainable and cost effective.
- It will provide a range of respite options that can be tailored to people's specific needs and aspirations. Many families are aging and will therefore benefit from having a robust model of support available to them.

Negative Impacts

- Ceasing to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent will have a negative impact on the people and families who only wish to access this service.
- Ceasing to provide respite at Budden Crescent will impact upon the workforce at Budden Crescent, all of whom are female.
- If families decide not to access alternative residential options, this could have a negative impact on their caring role as they would not have a break and could potentially be an issue if emergency residential respite was needed.
- 50% (4) of families who need residential respite find the proposed residential support unacceptable and may decline residential support if approved. This could negatively affect upon their health and wellbeing.

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

10.1 The implementation of the recommendations will be evaluated in the following ways:

- Progress against the implementation of each recommendation - reports to SCH DMT at 3 and 6 months.
- Evaluation of progress after 12 months.

10.2 The following evaluation criteria will be used:

- Number of people using the different respite options
- Whether the service options are able to appropriately meet demand
- The costs of each respite option can be met within existing budget.

11. REASONS:

11.1 The review provides a comprehensive assessment of the current service and sets out a vision for the modernisation and future direction of the Respite Opportunities service. It provides a set of recommendations for how this will be achieved.

11.2 Developing the Respite Opportunities Service as set out in the recommendations will ensure that the service is able to meet the diverse needs of the people it currently supports and in the future.

- 11.3 Implementation of the recommendations will result in a service which is fit for the future, delivers high quality support, and is cost effective.
- 11.4 An options appraisal was undertaken regarding Recommendations 3 and 4 which confirmed Option C (Appendix 4) as the preferred option. This supports the proposed recommendation to cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent and to provide it through other facilities in neighbouring counties.
- 11.5 Option C will ensure appropriate, sufficient, and cost-effective provision to meet need. The service at Budden Crescent is too large for the current and future demand.

12. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Respite Option	2022-23 Approximate Weekly cost	2023-24 Approximate Weekly Cost	Comments
Short Break/Supported Holidays	£850 - £1,600	£1,350 - £1,840 £3500	Costs are based on varying levels of care and support. Paid for as used. Supported holidays are usually a short break of 3—4 days duration with people accessing 1—2 per year. Costs have risen significantly due to reduction in number of providers and cost of living increases. Costs including 1:1 support where applicable
Shared Lives	£357 - £625	£386 -£671	Weekly costs are based on varying levels of care and support and paid for as used
Direct Payments	£564 -£1,929	TBC	Costs are based on varying levels of care and support. Paid for as used. Following assessment and revised allocation process likely reduction in costs anticipated for 2023/24
Residential			
Centrica Lodge	£1,066	£1,108	Block booking for 52 weeks per year Potential for future costs to increase as model is being changed by NCC
Augusta House	£3,047	£3,047	Spot purchase arrangement only pay as used
Budden Crescent	£3,449	£3,603	Weekly unit cost based on planned respite at 100% occupancy

Future Predicted Costs

The estimated indicative costs of implementing the recommendations has been undertaken:

Future Service	Description	Estimated Annual Cost	Estimated Total
Provide the full range of respite options.	Purchase 1 bed at Centrica Lodge	£57,837	£179,837
	Flexible respite options (holidays, shared lives, etc.	£80,000 (indicative allocation)	
	Respite Co-ordination (notional allocation p/t)	£42,000	

Current Budget:

2023/24	Budget Amount
Budden Crescent (S107)	£375,749
Flexible Options (S103)	£52,533

Total	£428,282
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- 12.1 The total cost of Option C is estimated at £179,837. This includes increasing the funding for Shared Lives, Short Breaks and Direct Payments and an allocation for respite at home support.
- 12.2 Implementation of the future model will result in an estimated annual saving of £248,445. (In year one some funding from the savings may be used to fund wheelchair accessible support).
- 12.2 Work is underway to develop a framework within which people will be able to select their respite options to ensure that people's needs are met within an equitable and financially sustainable way.

13. CONSULTEES:

Jane Rodgers - Chief Officer, Social Care & Health
Jenny Jenkins – Head of Adult Services

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Appendix 1 Respite Opportunities Review Report
- Appendix 2 Summary of Second Stage Engagement process with people and families.
- Appendix 3 Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix 4 Options Appraisal

15. AUTHOR:

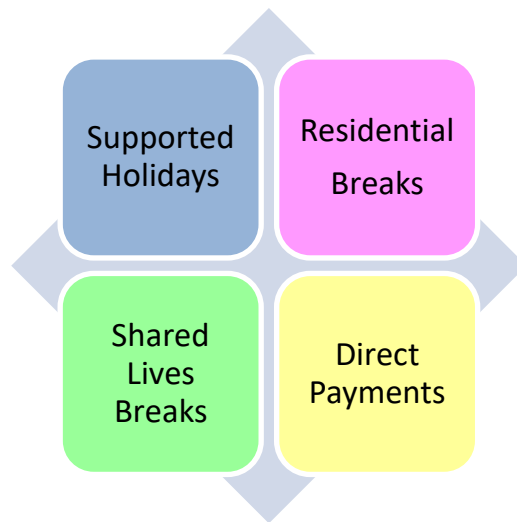
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THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESPITE OPPORTUNITIES SERVICE FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN MONMOUTHSHIRE



**Review Report
Updated June 2023**

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Strategic drivers and influences for people with a learning disability
3. People with a learning disability in Monmouthshire and the support provided
4. Eligibility for respite support
5. Development of the service since its inception in 2011
6. Respite arrangements during Covid
7. Current position and future demand
8. Initial Findings
9. Engagement with people who use the service and their families
10. Conclusions
11. Future development recommendations
12. Appendices

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2011 the Monmouthshire Respite Opportunities Service was created. The service offers a range of respite options for adults with learning disabilities, which includes supported holidays, shared lives, direct payments and residential respite. This range of support ensures that people and their families have access to a suite of flexible options which best meet their needs and wishes. It allows a bespoke and person-centred approach to providing respite support.

The Respite Opportunities Service has been successfully delivering this model of support for some years now. The demand and type of services being used has changed considerably so a review has been undertaken to understand how best the service can be developed for the future.

This report sets out the background, scope, findings and conclusions of the review and makes recommendations for the future development of the service.

2. STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The Act drives the overall strategic direction for all adult and children's social care services; it provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales.

The White Paper, Sustainable Social Services for Wales, published in 2011, highlighted a number of challenges faced by public services in Wales. These included demographic changes, increased expectations from those who access care and support as well as continuing hard economic realities.

The Act aims to address these issues and in doing so will give people greater freedom to decide which services they need while promoting consistent, high-quality services across the country. The Act seeks to transform the way social services are delivered, promoting people's independence to give them stronger voice and control.

The Act's fundamental principles are:

Voice and Control - putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control overreaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being.

Prevention and early intervention – increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need.

Well-being - supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.

Co-production - encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.

Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan 2022 to 2026

The Welsh Government's plan sets out its overarching strategic agenda for the development and implementation of learning disability policy for the remainder of the current term of government. An accompanying delivery plan is being developed which contains specific actions with timelines for each commitment. Co-produced with Welsh Government policy leads, the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group (LDMAG) and key stakeholder partners during a targeted stakeholder engagement exercise in early 2022, this action plan identifies and prioritises the key areas, actions and outcomes that will be pursued over this period. The strategic priority areas within the plan which relate to the Respite Opportunities Service are:

3.1 Implement recommendations from the 2020 review of Adult Specialised Services "Improving Care, Improving Lives, National Collaborative Unit" – Reduced admissions through increased community-based crisis prevention/early intervention support.

3.8 Loneliness and Isolation: Promote the importance of maintaining friendships and relationships to reduce loneliness and isolation.

3.9 Promote recovery and new approaches to day services, respite care and short breaks: Improved access to flexible respite and short break options that promote inclusion and well-being.

3.15 Carers and Carers Policy: The needs of carers of people with learning disabilities and carers with learning disabilities are understood and accessible support is available.

4.1 To promote voice choice and control for people with learning disabilities and their carers. To include advocacy and self-advocacy: People with learning disabilities have their voices heard, are listened to and are supported to make choices and control their own lives.

Monmouthshire County Council's Social Care and Health Directorate

Over the last decade Monmouthshire County Council's Social Services has transformed the way it delivers support and services. There is a clear vision and direction of travel, put simply the aim is to help people to live their lives, making sure everything we do starts with the person.

There is a clear focus on people, place, and community. It is a way of working which combines the resources we have as a council, builds networks, which in turn help people to remain connected to the things which matter to them, supporting their health and well-being.

We are working in partnership, with a range of agencies, with a shared purpose to support people's well-being. This enables us to share skills, expertise, time and increase the opportunities for people to access support in the community whilst reducing the need for formal services.

Where people do need services, we ensure services are of the highest quality and are focussed on meeting people's outcomes and improving quality of life.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

As with all social services, support services to people with a learning disability have changed considerably over the last 10 years or so. The emphasis has been on transforming services, so they are person-centred, strengths based and afford people the opportunity to be involved and engaged citizen in their communities and the opportunities they afford.

Previously services had been very traditional and were aimed at meeting need, usually within exclusive learning disability settings. The emergence of the Respite Opportunities Service, My Day My Life and My Mates have been as a response to this new approach; seeking to support people to make friends, engage in their communities and have equal access to mainstream opportunities. Underpinning each are the principles of person-centred support, a strengths-based approach, what matters to people and supporting people to live their lives.

Prior to 2011 respite for people with a learning disability was provided through the provision of residential respite care at Budden Crescent, a small home operated by the Council. Following a review, the Respite Opportunities Service was created which expanded the range of respite options available to people and their families.

4. ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESS TO RESPITE SUPPORT

In accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, any person with a care and support need has a right to an assessment based on their need and the assessment undertaken should be proportionate to the request and/or the presenting need. Effective assessments are the catalyst for ensuring that people receive appropriate care and support based on their identified needs and their personal outcomes.

People who are receiving respite support through any of the four options would each have received a holistic assessment to identify the most appropriate approach to address their individual circumstances and to establish a plan of how they will achieve their personal outcomes.

Traditionally, people using respite services were given an allocation of nights to use across the year. These allocations ranged up to a maximum of 6 weeks. Following the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and the need to deliver more outcome focussed care and support, the Community Learning Disabilities Team determined that they needed to change their approach to allocating respite care to reflect the principles of the new Act.

From 2018, a more flexible approach was adopted based on needs, desired outcomes and individual circumstances. At the heart of this was the recognition that no two families' circumstances are the same and therefore, a more bespoke approach was developed.

Families were asked to contact the CLDT when they needed a break from their caring role and respite was provided on this basis rather than a pre-determined allocation. Some families received substantially more than their previous 6-week allocation whilst other families identified they needed much less.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2011

Prior to the new service model beginning in 2011, approximately 42 people were receiving residential respite at Budden Crescent. This was the sole option available to people with a learning disability who needed respite support. The Respite Opportunities Service began operating from April 2011 offering 4 types of support. The new model enabled people to access the right sort of respite option which best suited their needs and aspirations. The service enables people to use one or more of these types of support. People's eligibility and access to respite services would be agreed with their social worker.

A brief description of each of the options of support overleaf:

Supported holidays

- People can access short and longer term respite breaks via a range of supported holiday providers
- A variety of holidays are available including traditional seaside breaks, activity breaks and themed holidays such as Football, Railways or 70s weekends.
- Provides great opportunities for people to expand their horizons, experience new opportunities and meet new people. People can choose to go alone or as part of groups who choose to access supported holidays together.

Residential Respite

- People can receive residential respite Budden Crescent in Caldicot, a dedicated respite care home operated by Monmouthshire County Council or in other homes in other regional counties including Blaenau Gwent and Newport.
- These offer high levels of care and support and people who use the services regularly have built up trusted relationships with the teams.
- As registered care homes, these services are skilled and equipped to support people with high level support needs.

Shared Lives

- Support is provided by the South East Wales Adult Placement Service, a Gwent wide service that offers respite to people within a family setting.
- Shared Lives carers and the person receiving support get to build trusted relationships and people have their respite with familiar people in a familiar place. This provides a type of “home from home” respite.
- Offers a range of support e.g., short breaks, long breaks, and emergency respite.

Direct Payments

- This option enables people to receive funding directly to arrange and organise their own respite support.
- It gives greater choice and voice to people to determine how they receive support and offers the greatest potential for individualised/bespoke options.
- The responsibility and management of the respite supports remains with the person in receipt of the Direct Payment.

When the new model was introduced, the expectation was always that there would be a movement away from the more traditional form of residential respite and towards the other options; once people and their families became more familiar with them and gained confidence. The realisation of this expectation is clearly seen when considering the changes between 2011 and the onset of the Covid pandemic in March 2020.

The key change highlights are shown below:

Supported Holidays

- In the early years demand was smaller but as people began to take holidays and reported positive experiences, word of mouth spread, and more people began exploring this option.
- A consistent steady demand for respite through supported holidays with a growing number of people accessing supported holidays.
- Supported holiday providers who specialise in working with people with a learning disability are relatively niche. The availability of holidays is constrained by this but work with providers to develop bespoke holiday options has been successful and prior to the pandemic there appeared to be some growth in the number of providers and types of holidays on offers.
- Supported holidays for people with high level support needs, including those who use wheelchair permanently, has been a challenge due to very limited availability.

Residential Respite

- Demand slowly reduced as people began to tentatively explore other respite options, this is seen particularly from 2017 onwards.
- Several people who received this support no longer required respite as they either moved into a supported living setting, care home, out of county or passed away.
- Younger adults coming through transition required or desired residential respite and preferred other forms of respite support.
- Residential respite remained a key support for a smaller cohort of people, especially those with complex or higher-level need.

Shared Lives

- Interest and demand for Shared Lives support has consistently grown.
- People have built trusted relationships with their Shared Lives carers and receive support in a homely, family setting.
- The Gwent wide scheme provides access to carers across the region and people are matched with carers from all LA authority areas and are not restricted to those living in Monmouthshire.
- Finding Shared Lives placements for people who are permanent wheelchair users or require specialist equipment has been challenging; the lack of availability of carers with appropriate accommodation, adapted to meet high level support needs has been an issue.

Direct Payments

- Interest in and uptake of Direct Payments has remained low. For many people /families the responsibility of taking on and managing their own support is something they feel unable to do.
- It is an option that appears to be welcomed by a small number of people and often those who are younger.
- There is considerable potential to promote this option as it would enable people to have greater voice, choice and control over how their respite needs are met.

Overall

- Overall individual demand for respite has reduced.
- Demand for both Shared Lives and Supported Holidays has grown consistently.
- Some people receive more than one respite support option e.g. Shared Lives and Supported Holidays while other access one option only.
- A shift away from residential respite to other forms of support.
- As numbers of people seeking residential respite has decreased, there has been an increasing ability to tailor respite opportunities to individual circumstances and preferences.
- Limited take up of Direct Payments.
- Residential respite at Budden Crescent had become the preferred respite option for a small number of people only.

The charts overleaf show the number of people accessing the different respite support options between 2017/18 and 2019/20:

Table 1. No. of People Using Respite Options
2017/18

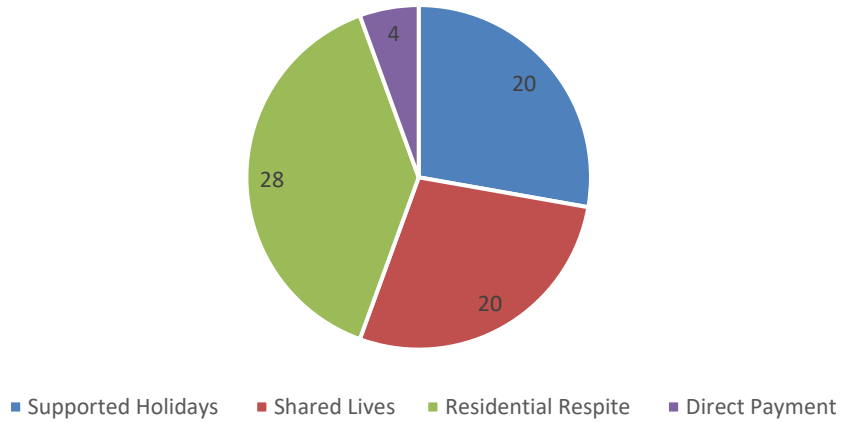


Table 2. No. of People Using Respite Options
2018/19

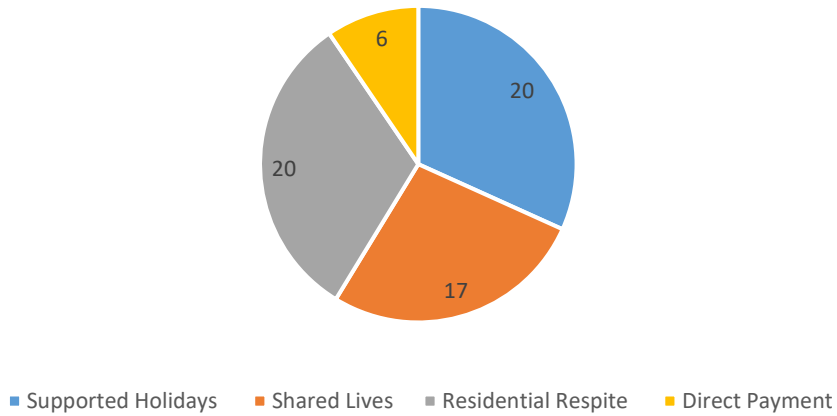
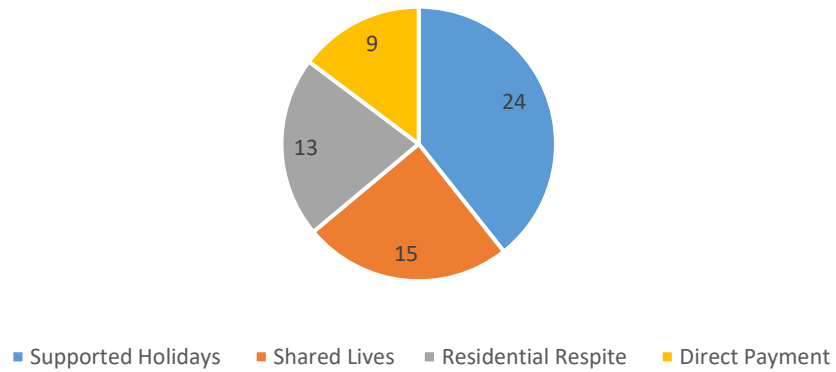
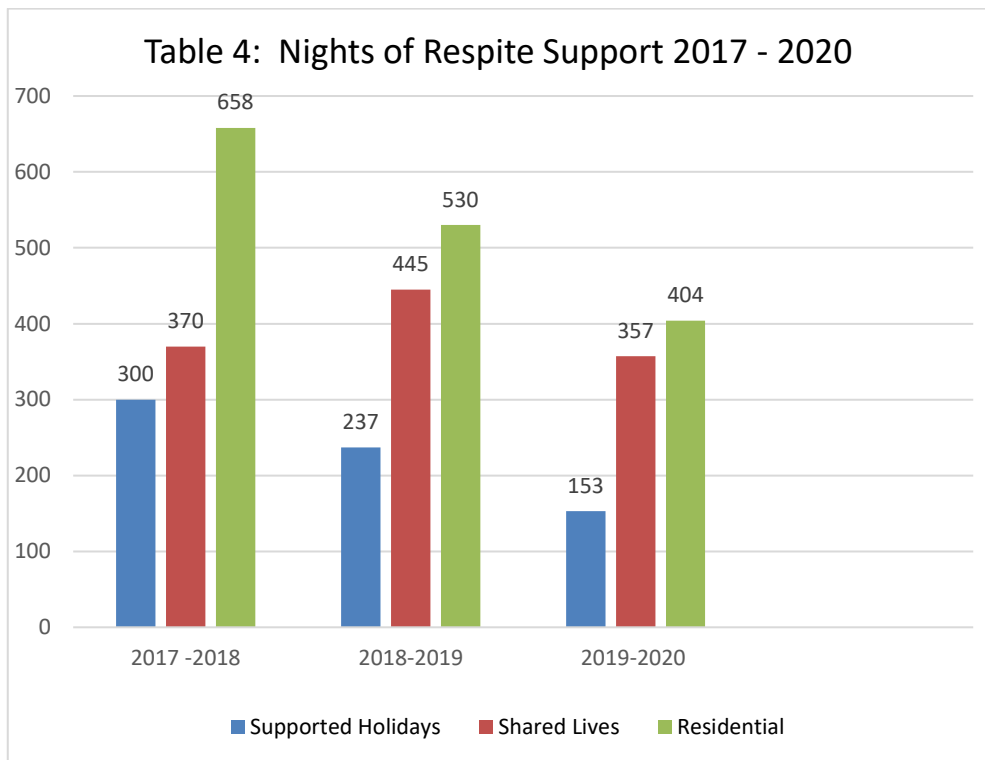


Table 3 No. of People Using Respite Options
2019/20



** Please note data has been updated since March 2023 Report following further validation.



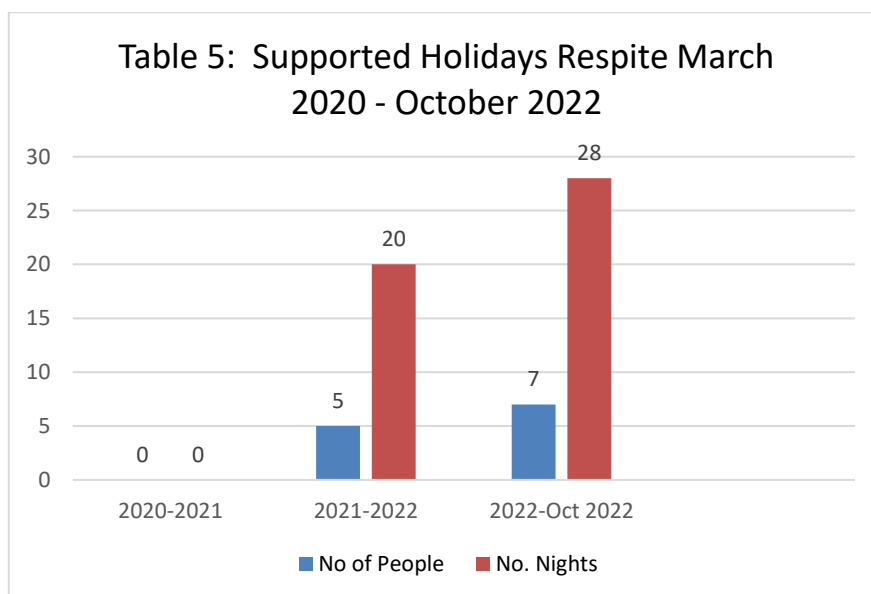
*** Please note data not available for Direct Payment nights

6. RESPIRE ARRANGEMENTS DURING COVID

The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020 brought significant changes to the demand for respite and the availability of support services. People understandably were only seeking respite where there was an urgent need. This reduced demand was seen across all the four respite options; however, the least impact is seen in Shared Lives support.

Supported Holidays

Unsurprisingly supported holidays were not operating during 2020/21 due to lock downs and restrictions being in place around social gatherings etc. Since April 2021 there has been an increase in the availability of supported holidays and the number of people choosing to take one. However, this has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. It is anticipated that there will be greater availability of holidays in 2023 as operators are able to resume their normal activity.



From the outset of the pandemic, given Budden Crescent’s status as a care home and its relatively low occupancy, an early decision was made not to keep it open and instead seek alternative interim forms of respite. It was felt that this might be challenging given that many other operators, e.g., holiday providers, would also not be operating in the circumstances.

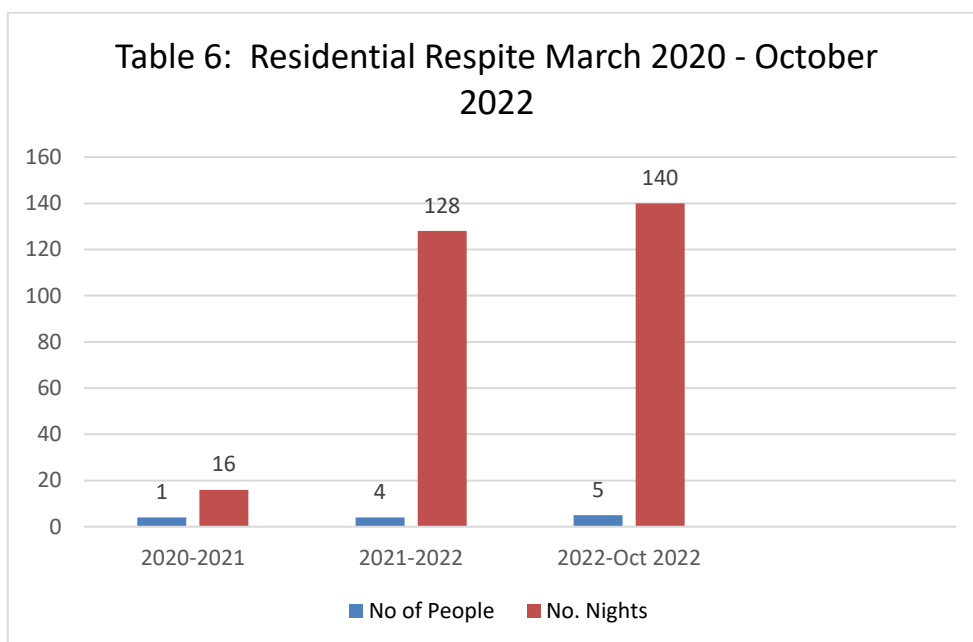
In reality, the story of the pandemic built upon the evolving narrative of demand for respite over previous years: with a reduced demand for all respite options.

Where residential respite was deemed as urgent alternative options were sourced by accessing support at respite care homes in neighbouring local authority areas which remained open. An interim arrangement was entered into with Newport City Council in June 2021 to provide residential respite for those who needed it. There was a clear increase in support provided from 2021, the majority of support was provided via the interim arrangement with Newport City Council; this arrangement remains in place while the review is undertaken.

As demand was reduced it afforded the ability to tailor bespoke respite options to need, working with the person and their family to explore options to meet the particular need at that instance. Respite support was provided in some instances in people’s homes, supported by colleagues from Budden Crescent.

Budden Crescent remained closed throughout the pandemic and colleagues were temporarily redeployed elsewhere to other social care services or delivered other respite options, such as respite at home. There was limited demand to use Budden Crescent, 3 – 4 people who were offered alternative residential. 2 of those people choose to access the alternative and the others not. See table 6 below.

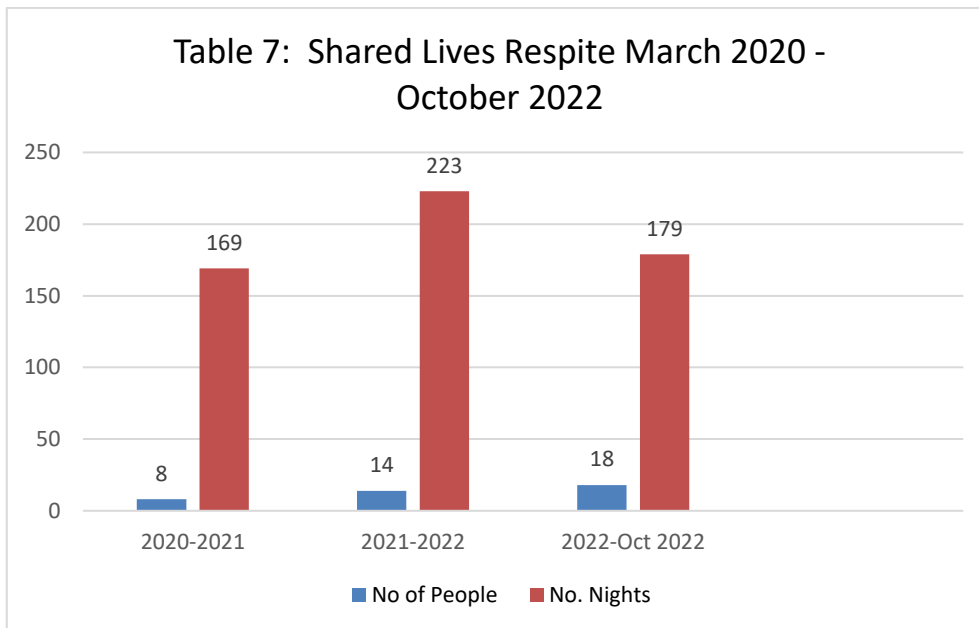
From the beginning of September 2021 to June 2022, the Budden Crescent building was used temporarily for an emergency Children’s Services placement. Since June 2022 the service has remained temporarily closed while the review of respite support is undertaken and the future need for support confirmed.



Shared Lives

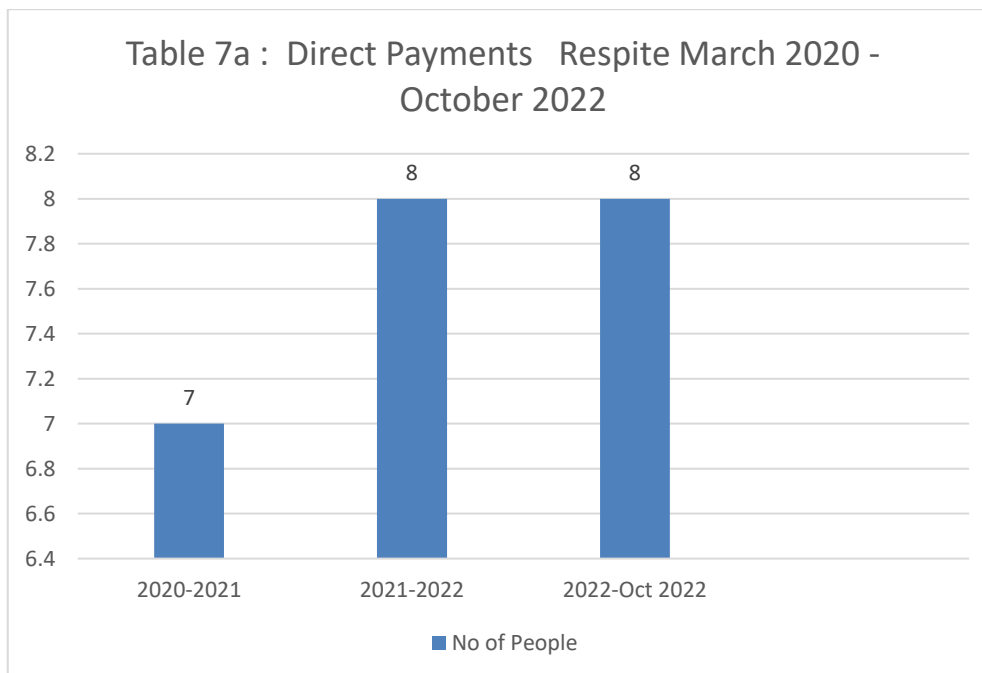
People accessing Shared Lives during 2020/21 was reduced in relation to previous years but overall, this is the one option which appears to be least impacted by the pandemic. As the setting

is a domestic one, the restrictions and guidelines in place in terms of residential support did not apply. This may have contributed to the continued availability of support and people’s ability to access it. Demand rose from April 2021.



Direct Payments

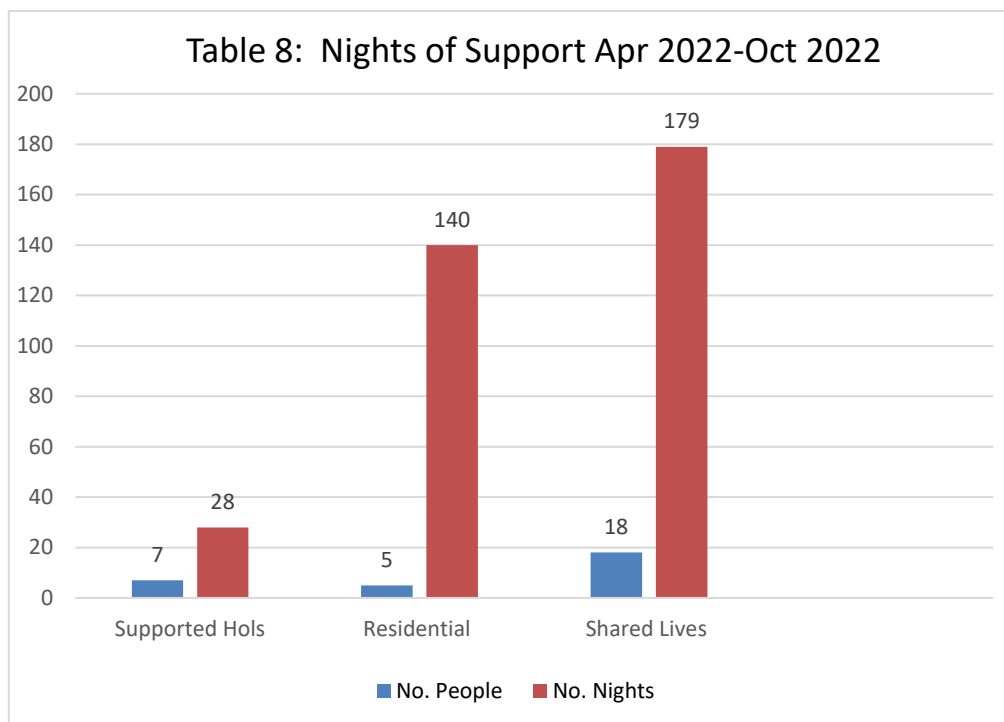
People continued to receive Direct Payments throughout this period and were able to determine how best to meet their needs within the constraints of the prevailing restrictions. There appears to be an increase in the number of people using this option although improvements in data collection may account for the higher numbers noted from 2020; see Table 7a below



7. CURRENT POSITION DECEMBER 2022

As restrictions lifted and normal society began to resume, overall demand for respite has increased but has not returned to its pre-pandemic level. Although there has been a marked

increase in the uptake of Shared Lives support in the first half of 2022/23. People accessing supported holidays is beginning to increase with more opportunities becoming available and people feeling more confident.



At December 2022 the Community Learning Disabilities Team were supporting 246 people with a learning disability in Monmouthshire. 30 of whom were identified as being eligible for the Respite Opportunities Service. A further 12 young people were identified as coming through transition and maybe eligible for respite support, through the Respite Opportunities Service, when they are 18.

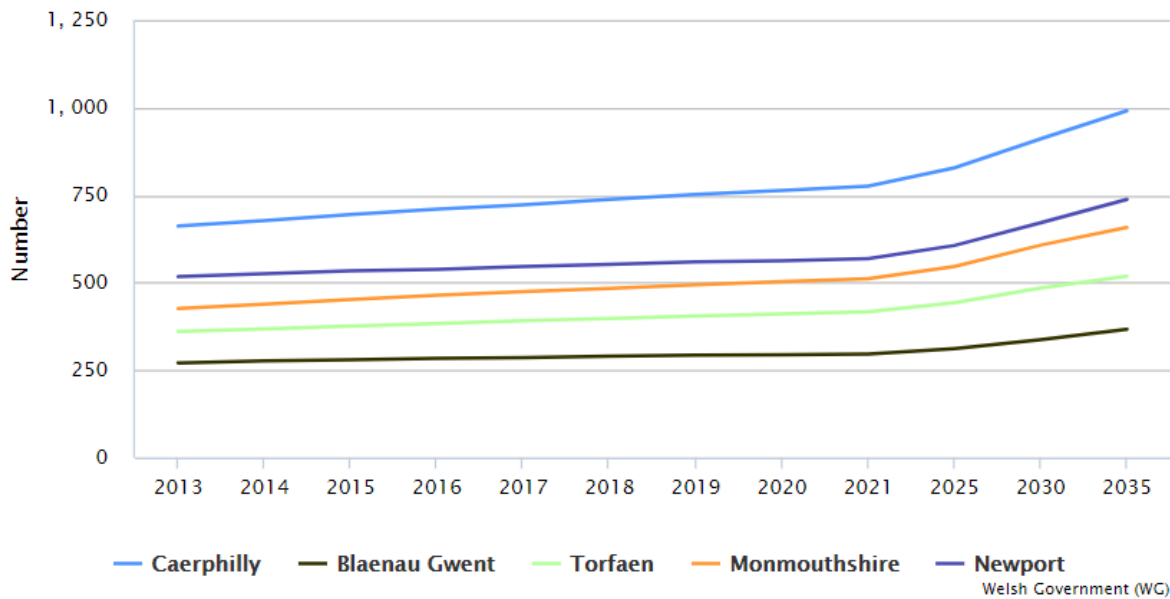
The number of people needing residential respite decreased earlier this year when 2 people moved from their family homes into a supported living setting and no longer require respite support. These 2 people previously received a high level of the respite support shown in tables 6 and 8 above: 102 nights in 2021/22 and 91 nights in 2022/23. There are 8 out of the 30 people eligible for respite support who require the higher level of support offered through residential respite. Of these, 5, are currently receiving residential support in respite care homes in Newport and Blaenau-Gwent. Not everyone is currently accessing residential support, 3 people have advised they only wish to receive residential support at Budden Crescent and have chosen not to use any alternative.

Future Demand Projections

The number of people with a learning disability who are supported by social services has remained fairly level for some time. Future projections suggest that this should increase from 2025 to 2035. The Gwent Regional Partnership Board Population Needs Assessment predicts all local authority areas across the region will see an increase in the number. The predicted increases range from 35.4% in Blaenau Gwent to 54.5% in Monmouthshire. The data is taken from the Register of persons with learning disabilities (SSDA901). The data may be an underestimate of the total number of people with learning disabilities as registration is voluntary. Local authorities submit numbers of those identified as having a learning disability currently known to the authority and included in a register for the purpose of planning or providing services.

Table 9:

Predicted number of people aged 65+ that will have a learning disability ☰



It is anticipated that a further 12 young people are coming through transition who may be eligible for respite support over the next 4 years. The current number of people receiving respite support, 30, is likely to change slightly as people either move into a supported living setting, care home, out of county or pass away. If the number of people needing respite support increases in line with the Gwent Needs Assessment predictions it is possible that numbers could increase to 45 plus by 2035 needing respite support.

8. INITIAL FINDINGS

The Respite Opportunities Services has been successful in providing a greater range of respite options for people with a learning disability in Monmouthshire. Changes in demand and the type of support people require has changed since its inception in 2011. In looking to the future there are number of key areas for future development to ensure that high quality support is available which supports people to live a good life. Clearly the impact of the pandemic was significant on demand but there has been an increase in people accessing respite support and we need to ensure that future support is available and appropriate to people's needs and aspirations, with a variety of options in place. The greater change seen has been that to the demand and need for residential respite and the consequent implications for the Council's residential respite service operated at Budden Crescent.

There were several aspects which were initially identified as needing further exploration and development. These included:

- Expanding the range of supported holiday opportunities available to people. Although there are several different holiday organisations which offer a range of holidays, we believe that greater choice would enable people to find the right sort of holiday for their interests and needs.
- Creating holiday opportunities for people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs; currently these opportunities are very limited.
- Refocussing residential respite options to ensure that people are able to access residential support in a range of different homes and to cease providing residential respite at Budden Crescent.
- Extending the availability of Shared Lives support to specifically enable people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs; currently these opportunities are very limited.

- Developing a respite at home option for people who would prefer to remain at home when their family are away.
- Promoting the use of Direct Payments for people who need respite so they have greater choice and control in how their respite support is provided.

9. **ENGAGEMENT WITH PEOPLE WHO USE THE SERVICE AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Engagement Process

We recognise how important respite is to the people who receive it and their families; it provides an opportunity for people to experience different things and meet new people and a much-needed break for everyone as well. Therefore, seeking the views of people who use the Respite Opportunities Service, and their families is critical in shaping the service for the future.

In October and November 2022 and an Engagement exercise was undertaken to seek the views of people and their families on what they had enjoyed so far, what they thought could have been done better or differently and what people would like to see in the future. All 30 people identified as receiving support and the 12 young people likely to be eligible for support in the future, were contacted by letter (Appendix 1 and 1a) asking if they would like to take part. People were offered a variety of routes to take part including individual meetings, questionnaires, or drop-in sessions, and were asked to let us know their preferences. Responses to this initial letter were very limited with only 6 people replying, all of whom requested individual meetings.

To stimulate greater engagement, all 36 people (adults and young people) who didn't reply to the initial request were written to again (appendix 2); they were provided with an Engagement Summary (Appendix 3) and questionnaire (Appendix 4) so people could provide their views if they wished. The summary included details regarding the areas for further consideration identified in the initial findings. Easy read versions (Appendix 5 and 6) of both the Engagement Summary and the questionnaire were also provided as well as a link to the questionnaire for those who wished to complete it online.

People were again offered the opportunity to have an individual meeting to share their views. Some families were contacted by telephone so they could discuss their thoughts and provide feedback.

A follow up telephone call was made to all 12 families of young people in transition and their families as there were no engagement responses received from this group. 6/12 families were spoken with, their reasons for not engaging included:

- they didn't remember receiving the report and question
- they were happy with their current support
- didn't think it was relevant

5 families indicated they would complete a questionnaire if they had another opportunity to do so. This will be undertaken as part of the 2nd phase engagement process.

Engagement Response

Overall, there was a limited response from people and families (26% response rate), 11 people and families took part and shared their views through the following methods:

- 7 questionnaire and or written responses
- 5 individual meetings were held with people and their families.
- All 11 people and families who responded are current users of the respite service. No responses were received from younger people in transition.

Consultation responses are summarised below:

- 4 (37%) of respondents currently receive or had recently received respite via Shared Lives. Feedback was universally very positive with one family keen to increase their hours.

- 5 individuals (45% of respondents) currently receive or had recently received respite via Supported Holidays. All were really satisfied with this option; it was reported that some providers were able to provide a door-to-door service and photos were provided throughout the trips which was really appreciated with comments made on enjoying music holidays and the opportunity to meet new people. Respondents were keen to receive more holidays and one asked for more investment in this area to increase opportunities.
- 3 (27%) were very keen to see the reopening of Budden Crescent, comments included:
 - if criteria was broadened the service would be used more.
 - that the number of people who used it was small, and that it wasn't as popular amongst 'younger people' however Budden was a 'trusted model' that they would use if it reopened.
 - Budden as providing a 'lifeline' and the 'freedom' and 'peace of mind' that the individual was in 'safe hands' while they had a break
- 1 respondent raised concerns about other residential respite options, particularly in relation to availability of dates, reduction in availability and the compatibility and mix of needs in other settings. It was evident they had confidence in Budden's focus on compatibility and learning disability.
- 2 respondents (18%) currently use residential services,
- In the future respondents said:
 - 2 (18%) wanted to try or have more supported holidays.
 - 3 (27%) wanted to try or have more Shared Lives.
 - 3 (27%) were keen to explore residential options, such as residential options in the local area (e.g. Augusta House) for emergency situations.
 - 3 (27%) were keen to explore a respite at home option to allow their family member to stay in a familiar environment whilst they, their family went elsewhere.
 - 2 (18%) were interested in more information on direct payments.

This first engagement process was not effective in generating sufficient levels of participation from people and their families and the intention is to refine the way in which we engage with people prior to seeking approval for implementation of any review recommendations brought forward to achieve a much greater level of engagement.

A second phase of engagement is planned for April 2023. All people and families who use the respite service or who may use it in the future will be telephoned initially by member of the Community Learning Disability Service. This initial telephone contact will provide the opportunity to share the purpose of the engagement process, advise they will be receiving the report and discuss the various ways they can participate and offer support i.e.:

- Face to face meetings
- Telephone conversations
- Written feedback
- Use of the questionnaire.

The 2nd engagement process will run for a longer time and people will have a 5 week period to feedback their views. At the end of the 3rd week a follow up telephone call will be made to people and families who have not yet participated to check if there is anything that would be helpful for them and enable them to take part.

10. **CONCLUSIONS**

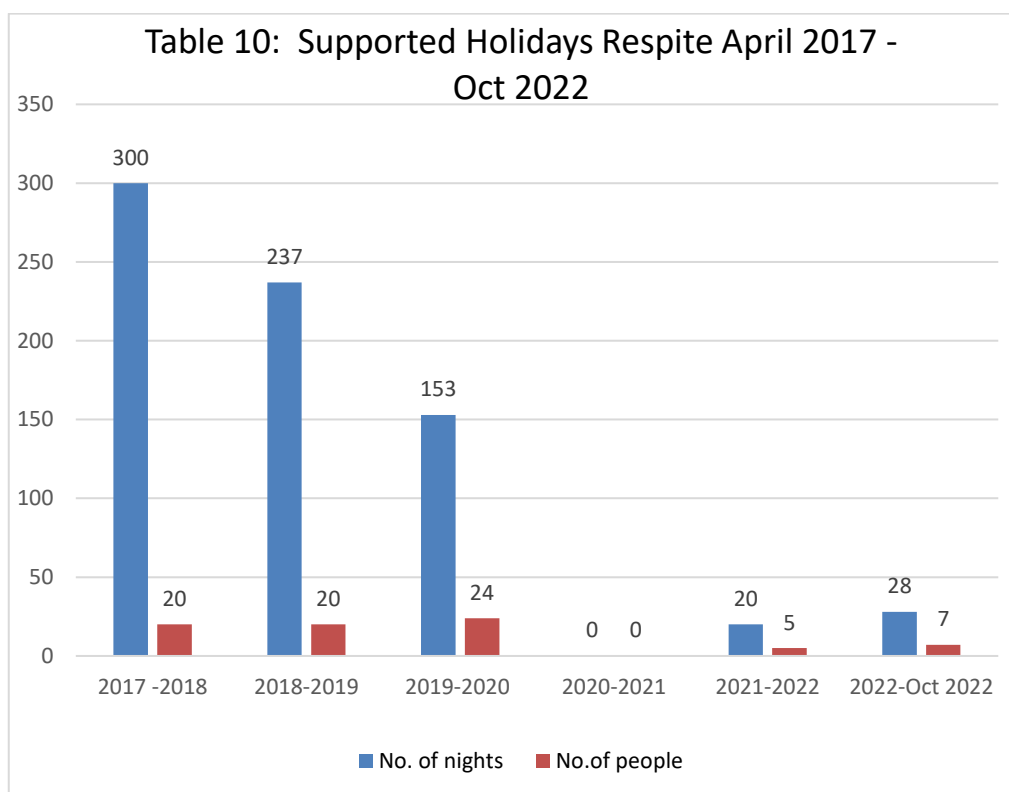
The Respite Opportunities Service has been generally successful in improving the range and availability of different types of respite support available to people with learning disabilities in Monmouthshire. Significant development has been seen in in terms of the provision of Supported Holidays and Shared Lives and these are now widely valued and used respite options by the majority of people. The promotion of Direct Payments was less successful initially with a modest take up of this option since the service began in 2011, although this picked up from 2018 onwards.

Demand for residential respite has changed considerably over the last 11 years with this option now being used by 26% of people. Predicted increases in the number of people with a learning disability will require a flexible and adaptable approach to the provision of respite support which can accommodate an increase in demand.

The conclusions for each option of the service as well as additional options are explored below.

Supported Holidays

When this option was first offered in 2011 it was very much uncharted territory for those receiving support, their families and colleagues working in the Respite Opportunities Service. From its gentle evolutionary beginnings, it developed considerably and by 2020 was a much used and valued form of respite; with over 2/3rds of people having a supported holiday. The emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020 had a significant impact upon supported holidays and it is clear that take up of this option has begun, but not yet at its pre-pandemic level, see table 10 overleaf.



A variety of supported holiday providers had been sourced and we are able to offer a selection of holidays offering short breaks and longer holiday experiences. Various types of holidays were on offer including hotel based, holiday accommodation and holiday camps such as Butlins. People were able to choose a holiday experience which best suited their interests and needs; people would often holiday with other respite recipients with whom they were friendly. Other chose to attend organised holidays alone, meeting and making new friends when they went. There has been some success in working with holiday providers to design and deliver bespoke holiday experiences, tailored to meet the needs and interests of the holiday makers.

4 (36%) people responding to the Engagement Exercise were from people who either currently or had recently received respite via Supported Holidays. All were really satisfied with this option; it was reported that some providers were able to provide a door-to-door service and photos were provided throughout the trips which was really appreciated. Comments included people really enjoying music holidays, and the opportunity to meet new people. Respondents were keen to receive more holidays and a request was made for more investment in this area to increase opportunities.

Supported Holiday provision for people with a learning disability is very much a specialist area and therefore a limited number of operators to source holidays from. The nature of the holiday sector is that holidays usually need to be planned quite far in advance, brochures usually being made available in the autumn for the following April to March. This has meant that people often need to decide in advance when and where they want to go if they are to have access to the full range. The availability of holidays is often reduced the further into the season it is as bookings have already been made.

Another significant area which has been a challenge is the availability of supported holidays for people who are wheelchair users and or have high level support needs. There was a hotel in Cornwall which offered this but unfortunately ceased trading in 2020 because of the pandemic. While certain bespoke holiday packages have been put together, generally this remains an area which requires development in the future.

Comments from the Engagement Exercise include a request for more investment to increase opportunities.

Since the easing of restrictions following the pandemic and the return to more normal life, take up of supported holidays has been very slow; in part due to people's lack of demand but also due to a lack of holiday options. A challenge moving forward will be how to increase confidence in this option and to promote its availability and benefits to people eligible to access respite support. In addition, the predicated growth in numbers of people requiring support from 2025 will require a broader range of provision to be available.

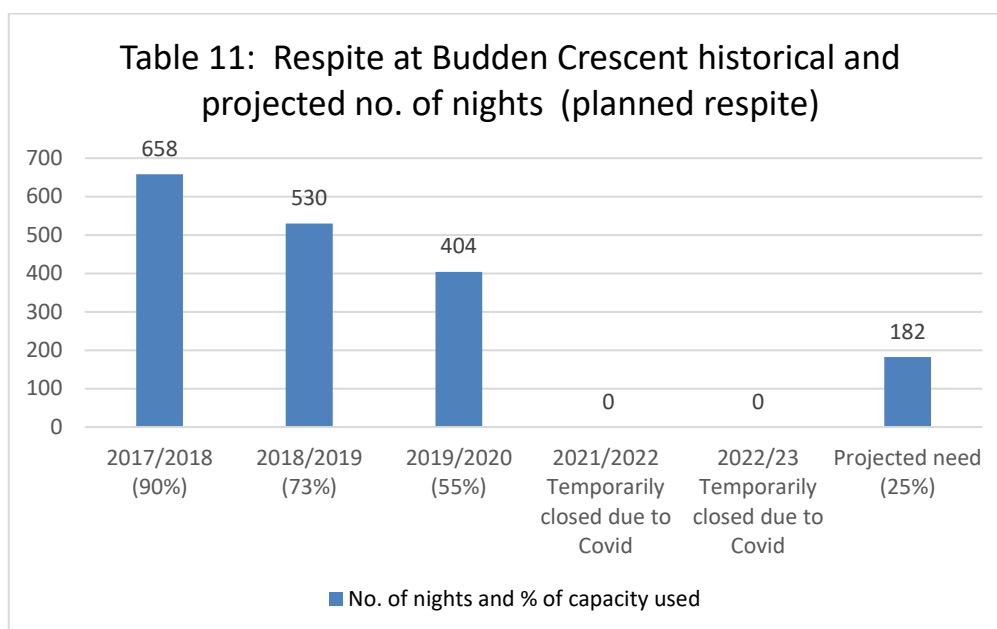
Residential Respite

Residential respite has been a crucial component of the Respite Opportunities Service since its beginning and even more before so, when prior to 2011 it was the only respite provision available to people with a learning disability. The vast majority of residential respite has been provided for over 20 years at Budden Crescent in Caldicot, a small domestic property, operated by Monmouthshire County Council. The service has a dedicated, highly experienced, and skilled team, most of whom have worked at the home since it opened. The service provides high quality support and can support people with higher level care needs and those who are wheelchair users.

Many of the people who have used the service at Budden Crescent have done so for many years and have built trusted relationships with the team; people and families have enormous trust in the service and team. People receive respite support in a homely and familiar environment by a team they trust and who know them well. Individual respite programmes are developed for each guest so they can maximise their stay, enjoying trips out and activities which suit their interests and needs.

Residential respite remained the most popular respite option for some years, in 2017/2018 more people received residential respite than any other option. Between 2018 - 2020 the number of people accessing residential respite decreased. At the point when the Pandemic started the number of people eligible for residential respite had reduced to 13 with 8 of those receiving it at Budden Crescent.

The declining demand for residential respite since 2017/18 has a few key reasons, including an increase in take up of other respite options such as supported holidays and Shared Lives, respite being provided on assessed need rather than a fixed annual allocation, younger people preferring other respite options and people no longer requiring respite following a move to a care home, supported living setting or out of county. One outcome of this reduction in demand has been that people receiving support at Budden Crescent are often the only guest at the home and do not benefit from the opportunity to mix with others. The impact of this reduced demand for residential respite is greatest in terms of Budden Crescent. This trend is seen in table 11 below.



There are currently 8 people who require residential respite support; 2 people receive their support from homes in Blaenau Gwent and Newport. 6 of the 8 people receive/ed support from Budden Crescent (prior to its temporary closure). A maximum estimation of the future respite requirements of those 6 people suggests 182 nights per year. This is approximately 25% of the home's capacity. During initial discussions with the people and their families, 4 indicated they would consider accessing residential respite options other than Budden Crescent. The other 4 were clear that they would consider no other residential service other than Budden Crescent. Other residential options have been sourced for those people who expressed a willingness to, including Centrica Lodge in Newport. Newport City Council has indicated that it would be open to discussing extending the current interim arrangement or entering a longer-term arrangement.

A maximum estimation of the respite needs of the 6 people who receive/ed support from Budden Crescent (prior to its temporary closure) suggests 182 nights per year.

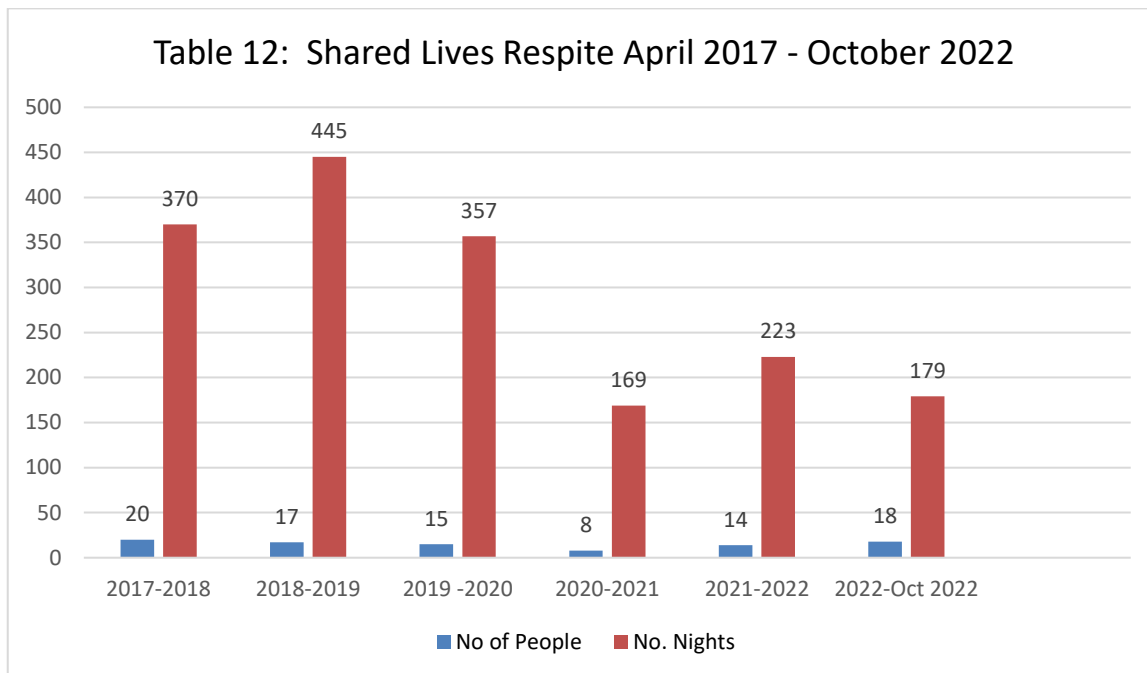
Future predictions suggest a 54.5% increase in the number of people in Monmouthshire with a learning disability by 2035. If this is applied to the existing number of people who need residential respite support, then that would equate to an increase from 8 to 12; statistically significant but does not represent any significant challenge in terms of providing support.

3 of the engagement exercise respondents were very keen to see the reopening of Budden Crescent. One respondent did not currently meet the criteria for Budden, but they felt that if criteria was broadened the service would be used more. One respondent understood that the number of people who utilised it was small, and that it wasn't as popular amongst 'younger people' however they felt Budden was a 'trusted model' that they would use if it reopened. Another reported Budden as providing a 'lifeline' and the 'freedom' and 'peace of mind' that the individual was in 'safe hands' while they had a break.

Budden Crescent has been a highly valued and trusted service for many years and remains so for a small number of people for whom no other option is acceptable. The changes seen over the last 11 years, the current demand and the future demand projections all indicate that a service of this scale is no longer required, and the future operation of the home may no longer be necessary or financially viable.

Shared Lives has seen consistent and considerable growth in the number of people using this support option. It is clearly a valued and attractive option for people which offers respite within a family setting and allows guests and host families to develop long term relationships. The option is very flexible with people having both short and longer term breaks; some Shared Lives carers provide emergence as well as planned support, this is particularly valuable when respite is needed at very short notice.

Of all the respite options, Shared Lives has seen the least impact in terms of take up as a result of the pandemic. Support continued to be provided during 2020/2021 albeit it a reduced level. Use for the first half of 2022/2023 is up, and if replicated in the second half, then levels should be at the pre 2020 level; see table 12 below.



4 of the engagement responses were from people who currently use or had recently received respite via Shared Lives. Feedback was universally very positive with one family keen to increase their hours.

The Shared Lives service is operated via the Gwent wide South East Wales scheme which is made up of 6 local authorities. The benefits of this collaborative approach can be clearly seen in terms of expanding the number and location of shared lives carers. People receiving report are matched with host carers from anywhere in the areas and are not restricted to their local authority footprint. This brings considerable benefits in terms of increasing availability and the right fit for people. The added benefit being that people experience different opportunities in another area.

The lack of availability of Shared Lives carers with suitably adapted homes to support wheelchair users and people with higher level support needs has been a key issue for some time. This has resulted in people who might benefit from using this option having no opportunity to experience it. Further work will be needed to explore the opportunities there might be to facilitate this in partnership with out South East Wales partners.

Another aspect which would benefit from expansion is the availability of shared lives carers who provide short notice or emergency support. Although this is rarely required having robust arrangements in place will bring added security and robustness.

Direct Payments

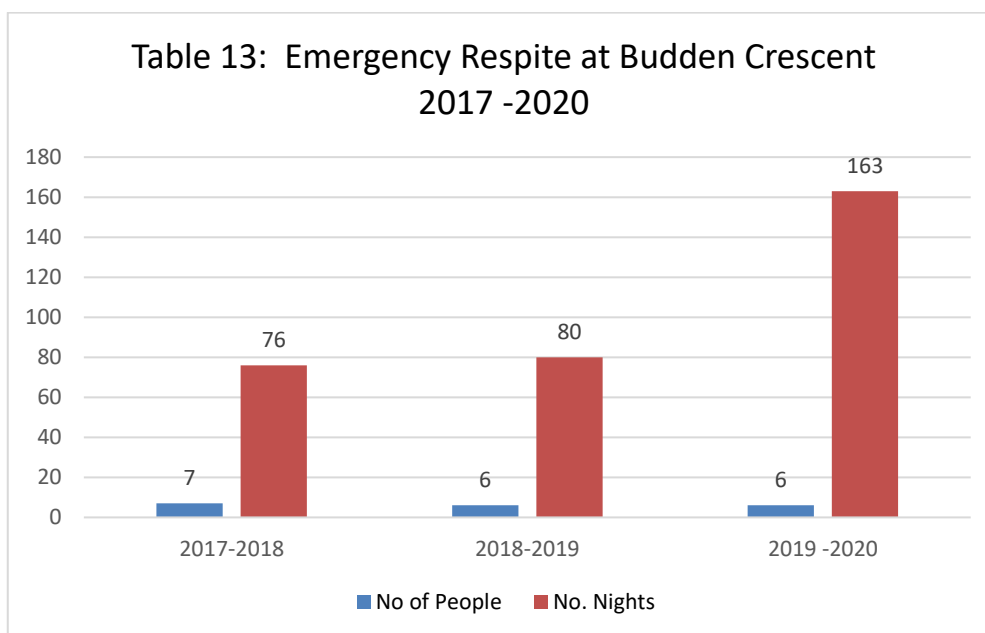
The take up of Direct Payments as means of facilitating respite support has increased with numbers averaging 8 per year. The way in which this type of support is used varies from other

types. Often people use it for very short periods of time e.g. 1 or 2 days and the flexibility of this approach enables people to dovetail their support to best fit their lives. It is often more attractive to younger people and their families who desire a truly bespoke response to their respite needs.

It is hoped that the current work across the Gwent Region to collaborate on the promotion and delivery of Direct Payments will bring benefits in the future and will ensure that this valuable option is promoted and used.

Emergency Respite

Emergency respite is sometimes required at short notice when family carers are unwell or unable to provide their usual care due to other reasons. These are typically for short periods of time though occasionally this may be longer where individual circumstances require it. Historically emergency respite has predominantly been provided at Budden Crescent. Analysis of the data during 2017-2020 indicates that a high proportion of emergency respite admissions were because of people needing a new home/placement rather than true respite. See table 13 below.



From 2020, when Budden Crescent was temporarily closed, other solutions for providing emergency respite support have been found including respite support at home, Shared Lives and alternative care homes. The current interim arrangement with Newport City Council provides sufficient capacity to provide emergency respite as well as planned.

Further work will be needed to develop a robust suite of options which can be sourced to support people when they need an emergency response.

Respite at Home

Another option for consideration in the future range of respite options is respite at home. During the early part of the pandemic when respite options were limited, creative and innovative solutions were explored. One such option was providing support into the person’s home when their carer was unable to support them as they usually would, either due to absence or illness. This proved successful when used in two incidences. This option could be a valuable addition to the range. Through the engagement exercise 2 families noted they were keen to explore a respite at home option to allow the individual to stay in a familiar environment whilst their family went elsewhere.

11. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Recommendation	Opportunities	Risks
1.	Expand the range of supported holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater choice for people and experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited availability of the supply in the market

	opportunities to enable greater choice to match people's interests and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity to meet current and future demand • Improved self-confidence and esteem through making new friends and new experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to develop more options and an expanded range • Take up may not increase
2.	Create holiday opportunities for people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will no longer be disadvantage due to their needs • Greater equality of opportunity • People will benefit from experiences which they have been previously unable to access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited supply currently • Ability to arrange bespoke solutions may be restricted by lack of appetite from providers • Small number of people needing the support may impact on viability for providers
3.	Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will have access to range of different respite homes to suit their needs • Extending the interim arrangement with NCC will provide certainty of supply • People will benefit from opportunities to mix with new people, make friends and take part in activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support may not always be available when spot purchasing respite • Newport City Council may not wish to enter a long-term arrangement • Potentially may be a lack of support to meet need
4.	Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of homes enables a more bespoke response to people's respite needs. • Resources can be released and invested in other respite options i.e. Supported Holidays, Shared lives and respite at home • A highly skilled and experienced team would be released at a time when there is high number of vacancies in SCH. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant impact on colleagues. Some co-ordination resource required for the new service, but most colleagues would need to be found alternative redeployment options. • It is a treasured resource for a small (6) number of families. A decision to move to alternatives options might be unwelcome/unpopular. • Colleagues are currently supporting 2 people in their community and alternative arrangements will be needed.
5.	Extend the availability of Shared Lives support to specifically enable people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater equality of opportunity and access for people • People will be able to receive support in a homely environment and develop relationships with their carers • Increase in respite options for people who 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited interest or availability of carers with appropriate properties • Investment may be required to fund adapted properties • Limited number of people requiring this support

		use wheelchairs or have high level care needs	
6.	Develop a respite at home option for people who would prefer to remain at home when their family are away.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can stay in their homes when their families aren't there • Expanded range of respite options especially for people who require adaptations to their environment • Increased reassurance for families when they are away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand may be limited • Lack of availability of providers • Operationally may be challenging
7.	Promote and increase the uptake of Direct Payments for people who need respite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater choice and control in how people's respite support is provided. • Offers greater capacity for bespoke options • Increased capacity to meet current and future demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand on Direct Payments team • Lack of interest/take up
8.	Develop a range of robust emergency respite options including Shared Lives, residential and respite at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust range of options in place • Choice of emergency respite support will allow for a more person-centred response • Increased capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support may not always be available • Limited demand may impact on viability of block booked options

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Respite Review – Phase 2 Engagement

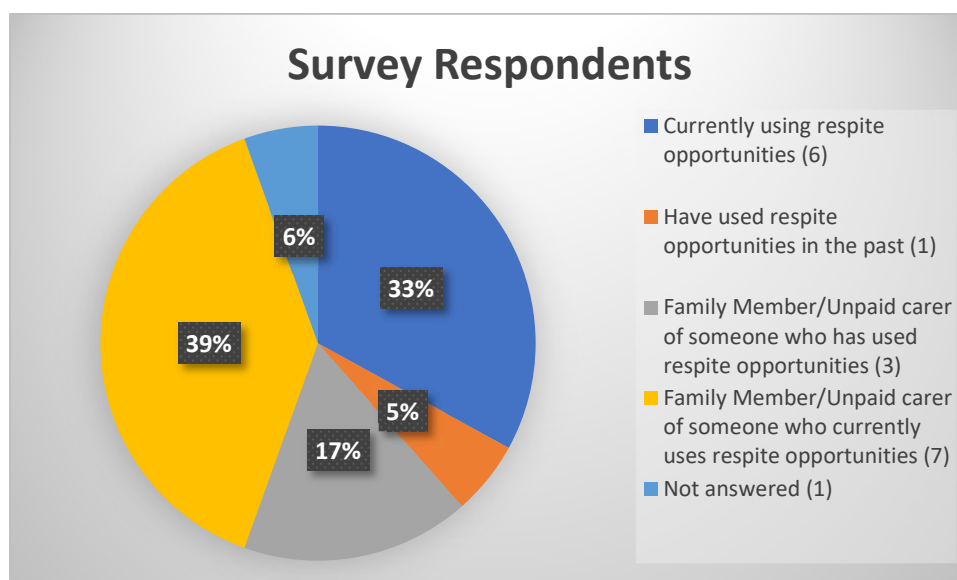
A second phase of engagement ran between the 31st March and the 7th of May 2023 on the final draft of Monmouthshire Council's respite opportunities review and the recommendations for the respite service in the future. A draft report was previously consulted on during an initial engagement phase which took place in October 2022 and November 2022, and included the offer of home visits, drop-in sessions, and questionnaires. Views gathered from this phase have been fed into the report, a second opportunity to provide feedback has been offered to ensure everyone has had opportunity to comment.

Phase 2 packs were sent via post to the 31 individuals who currently access respite services via Monmouthshire County Council and 12 individuals who are currently going through transition and will be eligible for these services in the future, and their families. Packs contained, the review report and the review summary (in both standard English and Easy Read), paper questionnaire (in both standard English and Easy Read), a stamped addressed envelope and a link to an online questionnaire.

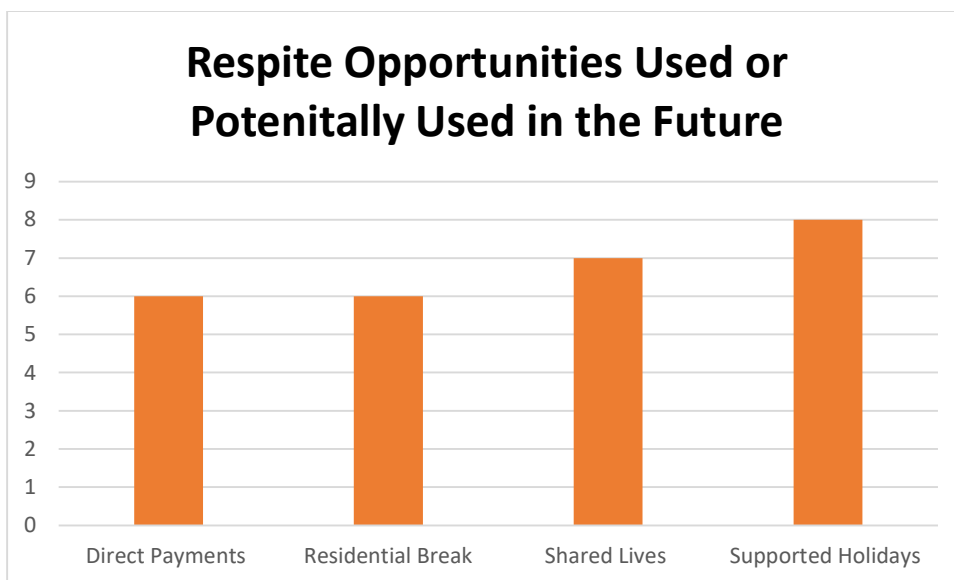
Direct contact was made with 100% of the people who currently access respite service or who are going through transition and may do so in the future, this contact included home visits, phone calls, emails, letters, and voicemails. Initial contact was made with all individuals in March by phone and letter including reports and questionnaires, and a follow up phone call was made in April to those who hadn't yet responded, to ensure equality of opportunity. The follow up call resulted in direct contact being made with 77% (33) (either via phone, email, home visit, letter, or questionnaire response) and voicemails were left for the further 23% (10).

18 questionnaire responses were received, and 7 further people provided some sort of feedback during visits or phone calls, resulting in a 58% response rate. The breakdown of responses provided below statistically only represents the questionnaire responses, further comments were received from 7 additional people.

A full breakdown of respondents to the questionnaire can be found below:

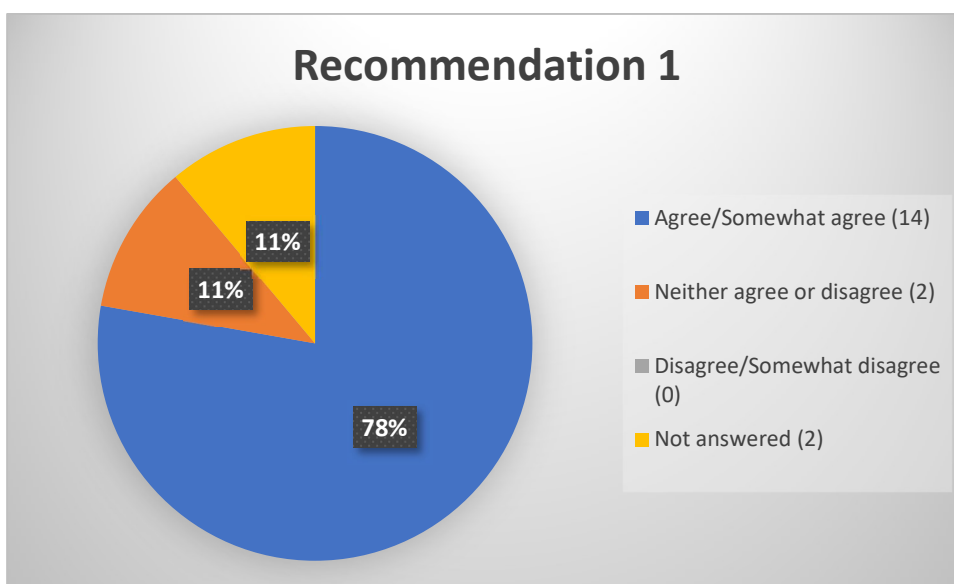


The 7 additional comments received by phone or visit were from family members so that would change the percentage breakup above to 56% of respondents being a family member or unpaid carer of someone who currently uses respite opportunities.



The table above shows which respite option the survey respondents are currently receiving. All were given the opportunity to give their views on each of the recommendations and on the report more generally, these responses are summarised below.

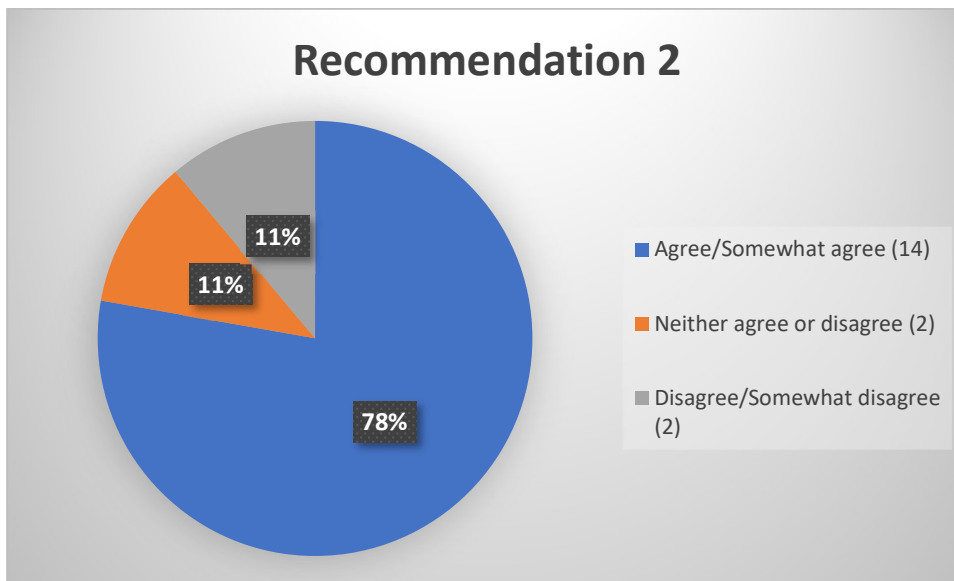
Recommendation 1: Expand the range of supported holiday opportunities to enable greater choice to match people’s interests and needs.



78% of people who responded to the questionnaire agreed or somewhat agreed with this recommendation. Positive comments about holidays were also made in verbal feedback provided over the phone. Individuals felt that a variety of holidays that met different people’s needs, and abilities would be beneficial, and that people should have the opportunity to holiday without their families in the same way as other. Others spoke of their positive experience of holidays describing some of the things their family members would enjoy e.g., dancing, visiting different place and social activities. Other’s made suggestions for the future such as more choice of who they go with, having something in common with other holiday makers and being able to access holidays more often.

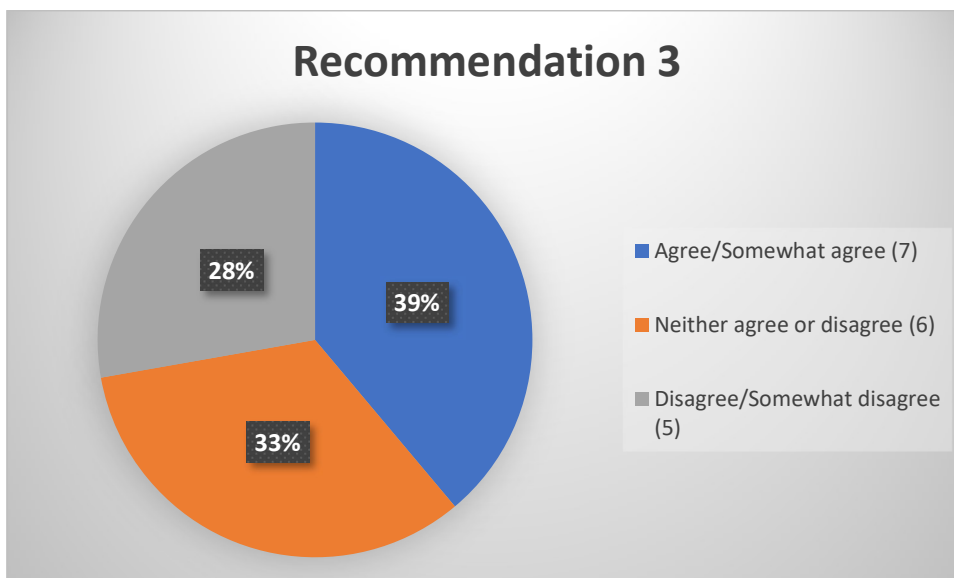
It was felt that too much choice could make holidays a complicated and time-consuming option. 16% of people weren’t familiar with the holiday option. A comment was received about considering an individual’s wider family and social circle in matching and planning holidays.

Recommendation 2: Create holiday opportunities for people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs.



Just under half of respondents (9 respondents) who provided comments felt all people should have access to these opportunities and that using a wheelchair shouldn't be a barrier. It was felt there should be no discrimination based on needs and holidays should be inclusive. A comment was received about the potential cost implication of this option.

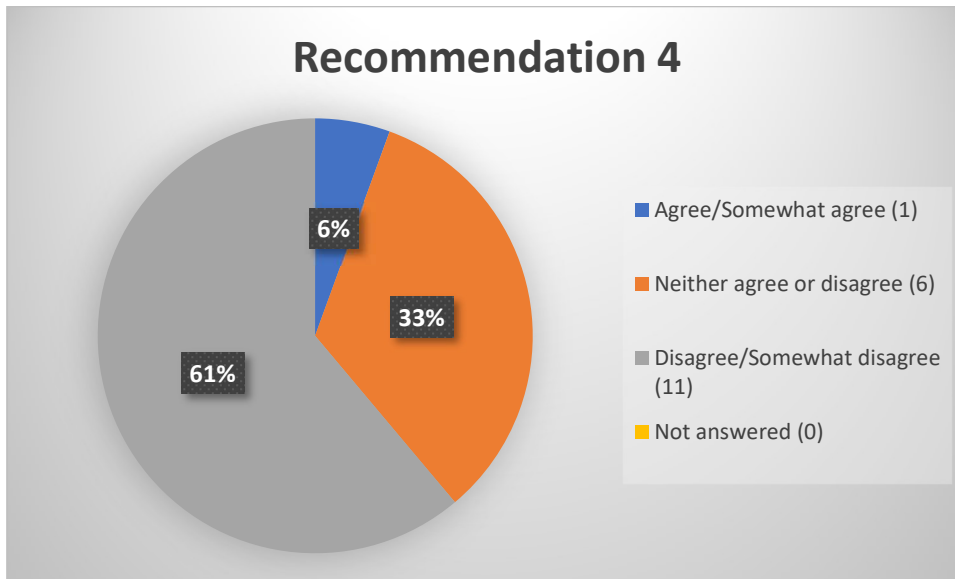
Recommendation 3: Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties.



Responses to this recommendation were more mixed, whilst 39% did agree, 33% were neutral and 28% disagreed. Again only 9 people provided narrative comments, about a quarter of respondents felt that respite should be available in Monmouthshire, an area that is familiar to the individual, feeling that going out of county could cause confusion. They felt options outside Monmouthshire would be OK if the individual wasn't disadvantaged for being from out of county. A further 25% felt change should only happen if needed.

There was some positive feedback about alternative residential respite currently received but felt more options and choice would be beneficial.

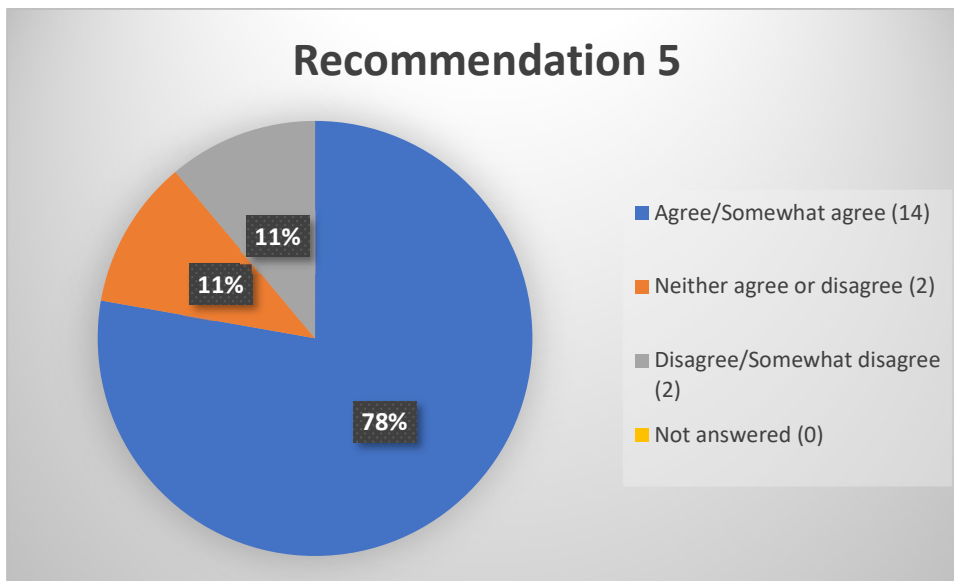
Recommendation 4: Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent.



The predominant response to this recommendation was to disagree, comments showed the closure of Budden to be an important and emotive issue for several people. In addition to the 11 people who disagreed with this recommendation via survey response, a further 3 positive comments about Budden were received via phone.

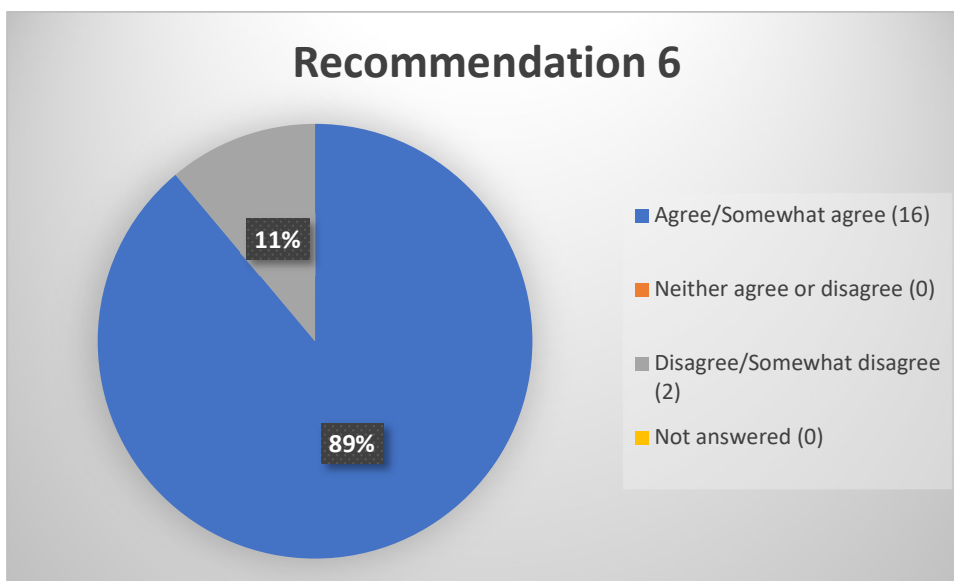
The need for a local respite offer was again mentioned. Respondents spoke favourably about the environment, its accessibility, and the competent, professional, and capable staff team. It was asked why close Budden if people are happy with this service and want to use it. 12% of respondents spoke of a reduction in funding, resulting in a lower-level service. 6% accepted cuts might be needed but were concerned about the negative impact closing the service may have on people and their families. It was speculated that a reduction in use may be due to a lack of publicity about the offer rather than need (stating that this had been the case with a council run children's respite option).

Recommendation 5: Extend the availability of Shared Lives support to specifically enable people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs.



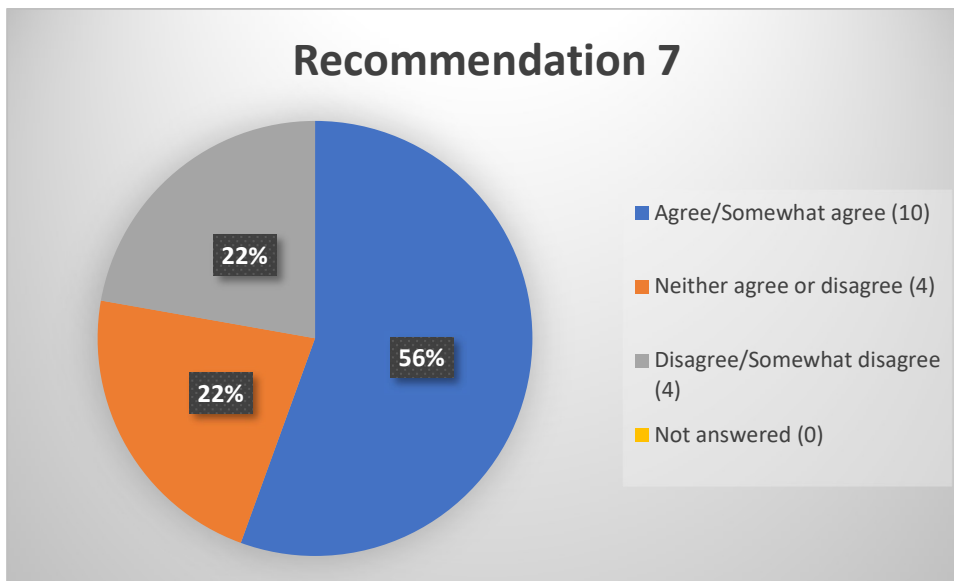
Respondent predominately agreed with this recommendation, feeling that people who want to use this service should be able to regardless of whether they are a wheelchair user or not and that everyone should have the same opportunities to access shared lives.

Recommendation 6: Develop a respite at home option for people who would prefer to remain at home when their family are away.



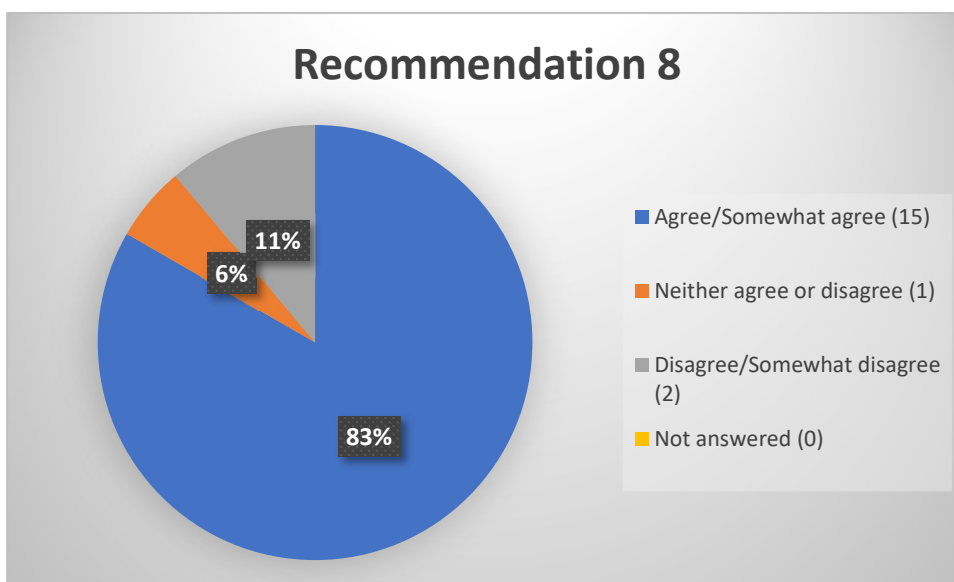
This was the most positively received recommendation and was seen as a progressive and enlightened step. The predominate theme in comments was the benefit that familiarity and comfort of surroundings would bring to the individual, the adaptations needed already being in place in a home. Individuals who access services said they like staying at home. Others felt this would be appropriate in some cases but not in others. Some comments received didn't think this option would work for everyone, as people may like time at home on their own or to keep the home space private.

Recommendation 7: Promote and increase the uptake of Direct Payments for people who need respite.



Responses to this recommendation were more mixed, some felt this option enabled more choice and control over how people received respite. A smaller number felt that the system to access direct debits should be made easier and more straightforward, that there should be more flexibility in how it is used and how often or said they did not want to use this option and felt it would cause stress in managing money. Others felt it was a good option but shouldn't be detrimental to other services, and that there should not be a bias towards this service as it won't always be suitable. Those consulted with via the phone who use direct payments currently were happy with the arrangement.

Recommendation 8: Develop a range of robust emergency respite options including Shared Lives, residential and respite at home.



This recommendation was very positively received, respondents spoke of the stress and worry that comes with becoming unwell (or worrying about the potential of becoming unwell) when you have caring responsibilities and prioritising others needs over your own health due to lack of support. Respondents described this as an urgent and critical need.

General Feedback

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any further comments on the report more generally. A small number of comments spoke of the need for an interim service, due to them not being able to access respite of their choice since pre-pandemic. A further comment was that a weekday service was needed so people didn't need to sit at the carer's home all day with no activities and little social interaction while the carer works. A few spoke positively of their current experiences including saying they were happy with their current respite offer, very happy with their shared lives carer (but would like a backup care) and positive experience about an out of county residential provider. A comment was made about the difficulty of having to book respite so far in advance, removing the possibility of spur of the moment plans. Comments were received about the need for continuity/long term solution, ever changing carers and services is just not good. A comment stated that emergency respite must be in county to avoid any additional trauma to their carers having to have them sent elsewhere. A further comment was made that the survey was narrow in its approach and fed into council narrative and shared their concern about users with higher levels of care needs becoming more vulnerable.

Observations

There was overall support for 6 of the 8 recommendations (1,2,5,6,7 +8):

- between 56% - 89% of respondents either agreeing or somewhat agreeing with each of these 6 recommendations.

2 recommendations did not receive overall support:

- Recommendation 3:
 - 39% of respondents either agreeing or somewhat agreeing
 - 28% either disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing
 - 33% neither agreed or disagreed.
- Recommendations 4 received the lowest support of all:
 - 6% of respondents either agreeing or somewhat agreeing
 - 61% either disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing
 - 33% neither agreed or disagreed.

For some respondents there is no alternative to the safety, comfort and local nature of Budden. People spoke fondly and warmly of their experiences at this service. Given the importance of this recommendation, it is worth considering in the wider context of people who were consulted as part of the respite review:

- 33% people have stated they disagree with this recommendation
- 2% have said they agree saying it costs too much for not many
- 14% recorded a response of neither agree or disagree
- 51% people did not respond at all to this recommendation

Overarching themes from Narrative

Respondents were able to provide narrative comments against each recommendation as well as being able to general comments about the report. These have been collated into the following themes:

- Equality of opportunity for all types of respite service regardless of disability or needs. Including Shared Lives and Supported Holidays for people who use wheelchairs.
- Supported holidays should have more variety, more choice, and more availability.

- Respite opportunities should where possible be in county, and where people did want or need to go out of county, they should not be discriminated for being a local resident.
- Any change should be driven by want and need.
- Budden Crescent should not be closed if people still want and need it.
- A respite at home service should be developed for those who want it.
- Direct Payments should be made more easily accessible and more flexible in their use.
- Emergency respite is a critical need. This should be in county if possible.



Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Ceri York</p> <p>Phone no: 07775 648623 E-mail:</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To continue to develop a varied Respite Opportunities Service in the future which meets the needs and outcomes of eligible individuals. And in particular to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the range of supported holiday opportunities to enable greater choice to match people’s interests and needs. 2. Create holiday opportunities for people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs. 3. Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties. 4. Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent. 5. Extend the availability of Shared Lives support to specifically enable people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs. 6. Develop a respite at home option for people who would prefer to remain at home when their family are away. 7. Promote and increase the uptake of Direct Payments for people who need respite. 8. Develop a range of robust emergency respite options including Shared Lives, residential and respite at home.
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Respite Opportunities Services for People with Learning Disabilities</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Date: 20th June 2023</p>

1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	<p>The new model will provide a fit for purpose respite service, which is sustainable, cost effective and meets the needs of not only those who currently use the service, but also younger people coming up through transition whose expectations may be slightly different. It will provide a range of respite options that can be tailored to the person's specific needs and aspirations. Many families are aging and will therefore benefit from having a robust model of support available to them, which includes emergency respite.</p>	<p>There may be issues for people who have further to travel to the proposed service in Newport. This could impact upon aging parents .</p> <p>People are very familiar with the existing service and a change may bring anxiety/concern to aging carers.</p> <p>Some families/carers are opposed to any other residential service than Budden Crescent. Some of whom maybe aging.</p>	<p>People who use the respite service have all been invited to take part in the review and share their views on the future operation of the service. This includes family carers who may be aging .People have been encouraged to share what their needs and aspirations for the service are and these have been used to determine the review's recommendations.</p> <p>On an individual basis, social workers could explore alternative options for families who may find transporting to and from the Newport or other out of county services a challenge, due to considerations such as age . E.g. Taxi's, support from other services i.e. ISS</p> <p>Families will receive support from their social worker and be offered opportunities to visits the service to help build confidence. Appropriate assessments, support and transition plans will be developed to support people using different services for the first time.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	<p>The current Supported Holiday and Shared Lives respite options do not afford sufficient opportunity for people who are wheelchair users or have higher level support needs. It has been extremely difficult to source supported holidays for people who use wheelchairs, and the Shared Lives service cannot always offer support in homes which are suitably adapted. The recommendations to enhance Supported Holidays and Shared Lives to increase access for people who use wheelchairs will positively impact their choice and experience and ensure equality of access.</p> <p>People with a learning disability will have access to a range of enhanced respite options including supported holidays, Shared Lives, Direct Payments and Residential respite.</p> <p>By enhancing the range of respite options available to people it will ensure that services can expand and grow to meet the needs of an increasing population of people with learning disabilities. Providing greater choice and access to support options will offer benefits in terms of upholding people's equality, diversity and inclusion needs.</p>	<p>A small number of people's families have stated they would not consider using any other residential respite option other than the existing one at Budden Crescent and would not use the new service. Families and people may not have a residential respite service available to them that they would use.</p> <p>This could have a negative impact on their caring role as they would not have a break and could potentially be an issue if emergency residential respite was needed.</p>	<p>Social workers will continue to explore options with these families in an effort to increase confidence and willingness to access the new service. Other options of respite support within people's homes could be explored using services known to the family e.g. My Day My Life and ISS.</p> <p>People who use the respite service have all been invited to take part in the review and share their views on the future operation of the service. People have been encouraged to share what their needs and aspirations for the service are and these have been used to determine the review's recommendations.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	None identified	None identified	
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified	None identified	
Pregnancy or maternity	None identified	None identified	
Race	None identified	None identified	
Religion or Belief	The range of respite options will allow people's beliefs to be respected and supported.	None identified	

650

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sex	<p>Enhancing the range of respite options available and ensuring the service is fit for purpose for the future will positively benefit women who are in the majority as unpaid carers.</p> <p>Cares Wales state that there are more than 370,000 unpaid carers of all ages providing care in Wales, the 2011 census showed that women make up the majority of unpaid carers – 57% of carers in Wales are women and women of working age (25 to 65) are significantly more likely than men to be providing unpaid care to someone with a disability or illness who is older.</p>	The majority of people employed at the current service are women and will be impacted if the new model is approved, as the existing service will close.	<p>Colleagues will be subject to the Council's Protection of Employment Policy, which will include seeking alternative employment options.</p> <p>There are a high number of vacancies in the Council for social care workers and it is hoped these would be suitable for colleagues.</p>
Sexual Orientation	None identified		

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions. This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p><i>None</i></p>	<p>Potential negative impact on the colleagues that may lose their jobs if recommendation to cease providing residential respite at Budden Crescent is agreed.</p>	<p>Colleagues will be subject to the Council's protection of Employment Policy, which include seeking alternative employment options. Support and advice will be provided in finding suitable alternative employment</p> <p>Many vacancies exist within SCH for care roles which may be suitable redeployment options.</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language.



How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p>	None identified	None identified	
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>	No new posts will be created or advertised because of the proposal.	Some posts may be deleted but no current post holders are Welsh speakers.	
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	Material relating to the remodeled service will promote the More Than Words Active Offer.	There will be no decrease to the service's that can be accessed in Welsh.	Not applicable




4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Negative: Moving to the new service model will result in the existing service ending and with that the need for its highly skilled and experienced staff team.	Alternative employment options will be sought with SCH and the Council as a whole.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	None	
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Positive: People will have access to range of respite services that will support their and their families' health and well-being. Negative: a minority of families find the proposed model unacceptable and may decline residential support if approved. This could negatively affect upon their health and wellbeing.	Social workers will continue to explore options with these families in an effort to increase confidence and willingness to access the new service. Other options of respite support within people's homes could be explored using services known to the family e.g. My Day My Life and ISS.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	None	
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	None	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	None	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Positive: People with a learning disability have more choice and control over how they receive respite support. People with learning disabilities who are wheelchair users and or have higher level support needs will have access to Supported Holidays and Shared lives.</p>	<p>Seek and source supported holiday providers which can offer opportunities for people who are wheelchair users and or have higher support needs.</p> <p>Explore with Gwent regional partners what can be implemented to increase availability of Shared Lives Carers for people who use wheelchairs. Implement actions to ensure equal access to the service.</p>

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p> Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The future development of the Respite Opportunities Service will future proof the service and have a range of flexible options in place to meet the predicted increase in demand up to 2035</p>	
<p> Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The review of the Respite Opportunities Service has sought the views of the people we currently support, those we might support in the future, their families, social workers and other key stakeholders. Working in partnership to shape the future of respite opportunities available in Monmouthshire.</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The key stakeholders are people with learning disabilities and their families in Monmouthshire, those who currently use the service and those who may want to use it in the future. Colleagues currently working in the service are also significant stakeholders. Other stakeholders include Social Workers, service managers and other internal staff. This review is a key part of the ongoing development of the service ensuring that it continues to meet needs of people with disabilities in Monmouthshire enabling them to be connected to their local communities and develop and flourish in the lives they choose.</p>	
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Ensuring resources are targeted where needing providing support to families with caring responsibilities will help sustain this support and may reduce the demand for long term care which is more costly.</p> <p>There is no anticipated reduction in service delivery because of recommendations.</p> <p>Cost savings have been identified which would increase the long term sustainability of the service.</p>	None identified
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	None identified	N/A

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Appropriate services will be available to support vulnerable people and prevent/detect any potential safeguarding issues which can then be dealt with.	None	
Corporate Parenting	None as service is for adults only	None as service is for adults only	N/A

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

Page 57

- Internal data on service demand over 5 year period for: shared lives, supported holidays, residential respite and DP
- Future demand for services including those young people coming through transition
- Occupancy levels at Budden Crescent
- Internal data on staffing levels at Budden Crescent
- Financial data relating to costs of each element of the service
- Feedback from 2 engagement exercises with people who use the service and their families
- Feedback from 2 engagement exercise with young people who may use the service in the future and their families
- Internal project team's consideration of opportunity and risk
- Gwent Population Needs Assessment 2022

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

Positive Impacts:

The recommendations of the review are to enhance and expand supported holidays and shared lives, the development of respite at home support and the refocusing of residential respite support. These will ensure that people and their families have access to a range of different respite options which can best meet their needs and aspirations. Providing greater voice, choice, and control.

The recommendations to enhance Supported Holidays and Shared Lives to increase access for people who use wheelchairs will positively impact their choice and experience and ensure equality of access.

The further development of the service will provide a fit for purpose respite service, which is sustainable and cost effective. It will provide a range of respite options that can be tailored to the person's specific needs and aspirations. Many families are aging and will therefore benefit from having a robust model of support available to them.

Enhancing the range of respite options available and ensuring the service is fit for purpose for the future will positively benefit women who are in the majority as unpaid carers.

Negative Impacts

One of the review recommendations is to refocus residential respite options to ensure that people are able to access residential support in a range of different homes and another to cease providing residential respite at Budden Crescent. This will have a negative impact on a small number of people and families who only wish to access residential respite at Budden Crescent. Furthermore, ceasing to provide respite at Budden Crescent will impact upon the workforce at Budden Crescent, all of whom are female.

If families decide not to access alternative residential options this could have a negative impact on their caring role as they would not have a break and could potentially be an issue if emergency residential respite was needed.

Impact on the colleagues that may lose their jobs if the recommendation to cease providing residential respite at Budden Crescent is agreed. A minority of families find the proposed residential support unacceptable and may decline residential support if approved. This could negatively affect upon their health and wellbeing.

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Develop an enhanced engagement methodology for 2 nd phase to increase participation of people using the service and their families.	March 2023	Respite Review Project Team

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.	Report to informal Cabinet on review and proposals for consultation.	August 2022	Enhance engagement methodology in next round to ensure increased participation levels
2.	Report to informal cabinet in preparation for report to Scrutiny and Cabinet.	27 th June 2023	

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RECOMMENDATION 4 - OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option A: Retain Budden Crescent at its current level of provision	
Opportunities	Risks
The continued operation of Budden Crescent will bring comfort and stability to those who use it and their families.	Continuing to operate at current will commit us to a model that is not aligned with current preferences, current and future demand and will have significant cost implications (Section 10).
12 people are employed. Each has long service; this would ensure the retention of this established team.	Low usage means that people often experience respite alone, limiting social and other opportunities.
Potential to sell surplus capacity to other neighbouring authorities	Previous exploration of this has shown a lack of need. Discussions with neighbouring Council's has confirmed this still to be the case.

Option B: Reconfigure Budden Crescent so capacity is aligned to demand	
Opportunities	Risks
The continued operations of Budden Crescent will bring comfort and stability to those who use it and their families.	Demand is low approx. 182 days per year. Overprovision if demand is less than projected. Committing to delivering residential respite which is increasingly out of step with use and demand.
Service provision would be aligned more to demand and reduction in operation costs	Unit costs are higher than alternative residential options (Section 10) Low usage means that people often experience respite alone, limiting social and other opportunities.
Some people will continue to be employed. Reconfiguring will enable the retention of some of this established team. Potential redeployment elsewhere in social care.	The service team would be significantly reduced. Annualised contracts and part year working maybe unattractive to colleagues who may leave.

Option C: Cease delivering respite at Budden Crescent and use a range of other residential respite facilities in neighbouring counties.	
Opportunities	Risks
The facilities in Blaenau Gwent and Newport can provide appropriate support to meets demand and the needs of people Other homes are available which provide respite subject to capacity.	6 people and families have strongly expressed its their preferred or their only acceptable option. Not all capacity at Centrica may be needed so some overprovision and associated costs with a block booking

	Transporting/visiting Newport and Blaenau-Gwent may be an issue for some families.
Newport CC has indicated it would be willing to enter into a longer-term arrangement to block book 1 bed at Centrica Lodge. Centrica Lodge has 7 beds so people will opportunity to socialise with others during their stay.	The Centrica Lodge service is currently being remodelled and potentially the weekly costs could increase as a result. No increase in future costs has been confirmed as this stage.
Service provision will be aligned to demand and offers a more cost-effective delivery model (Section 10)	Decommissioning Budden Crescent would have a significant impact on the colleagues employed there. There may be some co-ordination resource required, but most colleagues would need redeployment. There could be potential redundancies.

Estimated Costs

Option No.	Description	Unit Cost per week	Estimated Annual Cost	Estimated Total
A: Retain Budden Crescent at its current level of provision	Residential Respite at Budden Crescent	£3,603 (100% occupancy)	£375,749 (£353,196 -staffing)	£455,749
		£10,039 (35% occupancy based on predicted demand of 182 nights planned and 80 emergency respite)	(£21,823 - non staffing)	
	Flexible respite options (short break/holidays, shared lives, Direct Payments etc)		£80,000 (indicative allocation)	
Option B: Reconfigure Budden Crescent so capacity is aligned to demand	Reconfigured Respite at Budden Crescent (based on 182 nights planned and 80 emergency respite)	£5,741(100% occupancy)	£214,894 (£193,071 - staffing) (£12,823 - non staffing)	£294,894

	Flexible respite options (holidays, shared lives, etc.)		£80,000 (indicative allocation)	
C: Cease delivering respite at Budden Crescent and use a range of other residential respite facilities in neighbouring counties.	Purchase 1 bed at Centrica Lodge	£1,108 (indicative cost based on 100% occupancy)	£57,837	£179,837
		£1,545 (indicative cost at 72% occupancy Based on predicated demand of 182 nights planned and 80 emergency)		
	Flexible respite options (holidays, shared lives, etc.)		£80,000 (indicative allocation)	
	Respite Co-ordination (notional allocation p/t)		£42,000	

Conclusion: Option C is the preferred option.

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SUBJECT:	MEETING GYPSY & TRAVELLER PITCH NEEDS - LAND IDENTIFICATION
MEETING:	PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	19TH JULY 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a proposal that the Council consults on the suitability of four pieces of Council owned land for potential development to meet (all or part meet) its statutory obligation to address identified Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs in Monmouthshire. It also recommends further evaluation of a fifth piece of land, to inform possible consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 Consider the process implemented to identify Council owned land suitable for the potential development of Gypsy & Traveller pitch provision.
- 2.2 Consider the evaluation of five pieces of Council owned land considered to be possibly suitable, subject to the findings of any further required assessment, for potential development of Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision.
- 2.3 Recommend to Cabinet that the following pieces of Council owned land are consulted on for potential development for Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision:
- Manson Heights, Monmouth
 - Rocklea, Mitchel Troy
 - Garthi Close, Mitchel Troy
 - Langley Close, Magor
- 2.4 Recommend to Cabinet that further evaluation is undertaken on the following piece of Council owned land, to further inform possible suitability and if applicable, (subject to findings) future consultation.
- Dancing Hill, Undy (west of Dancing Hill)

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 All Council's in Wales have a duty under Part 3, Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to undertake a Gypsy & Traveller Assessment every five years. Where unmet need for mobile home pitches is identified, the necessary pitch provision needs to be made. The last Assessment was adopted by Cabinet on 6th January 2021. The summary conclusions of the most recent Assessment are:
- The assessment finds that there is an unmet need of nine pitches under the assessment period 2020 to 2025.
 - Beyond 2025, there is a further unmet need of four pitches over the remaining length of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2026-33).

- 3.2 The Council has implemented a process to evaluate all Council owned land to identify suitable land that will help to meet the above need. An overview of the identification process undertaken by the Council is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 The outcome of the identification process has concluded that five pieces of Council owned land may be suitable for development as pitch provision, four of which it is proposed are consulted upon. It is proposed that further investigative work is undertaken in respect of the fifth site prior to any decision on consultation. An overview of this land is provided below and a more detailed overview for each location is provided in **Appendix 2 and 3**.

MCC Land*	Summary/Main Conclusion	Recommendation
Land Considered Suitable		
Manson Heights, Monmouth	<p>No significant feedback received to suggest the site's suitability shouldn't be further considered. However, historical mapping has identified an Isolation Hospital for infectious diseases was previously situated on this land, likely between 1905-1964.</p> <p>The land is prioritised on the Councils Contaminated Land inspection strategy as a category E (low priority for further inspection).</p> <p>Should any type of accommodation be built on the land, (without site investigation and, if necessary, remediation) the site would become a category B (medium-high priority).</p>	<p>Consider retaining in process for consultation.</p> <p>Any future decision to develop would need to be subject to a land contamination site investigation.</p>
Garthi Close, Mitchel Troy	<p>No significant feedback received to suggest the site's suitability shouldn't be further considered. For assessment criteria RAG rated red, it is considered that mitigating action can be taken to address the concerns raised .</p>	<p>Consider retaining in process for consultation.</p>
Rocklea, Mitchel Troy	<p>No significant feedback received to suggest the site's suitability shouldn't be further considered. For assessment criteria RAG rated red, it is considered that mitigating action can be taken to address the concerns raised.</p>	<p>Consider retaining in process for consultation.</p>
Langley Close, Magor	<p>No significant feedback received to suggest the site's suitability shouldn't be further considered.</p>	<p>Consider retaining in process for consultation.</p>
Land Possibly Not Suitable – But Not Currently Determined		
Dancing Hill 1.85 acres, Undy	<p>Feedback received to suggest the site may not be suitable. shouldn't</p>	<p>Consider retaining or removing from process.</p>

	<p>be further considered. For assessment criteria with a RAG red rating, suitability would be subject to further assessment/surveys.</p> <p>It is not known whether mitigating action would be necessary or feasible to address and remediate the concerns raised.</p>	<p>It is recommended that if this land was retained in the process, possible use for Gypsy & Traveller pitch provision isn't consulted upon until such time the required investigative survey work has been completed and the findings known and understood.</p>
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A number of the above areas of land are large enough to accommodate the whole of the pitch needs identified in the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment. **It is not being proposed nor recommended that larger areas of land are utilised necessarily to their maximum pitch capacity and, therefore, **should not** be evaluated or considered on the basis of their maximum pitch capacity. Smaller provision is considered more appropriate and sustainable.*

3.4 Of the need of thirteen pitches identified, it is proposed that one pitch is facilitated by supporting a private household with acquiring planning permission for an additional pitch on their existing site. This effectively reduces the pitch requirement to 12.

3.5 Any further planning permission approvals since the Gypsy & Traveller Assessment should also be taken into account.

3.5 The proposed next steps are:

- **People Scrutiny - 19th July 2023** – consider proposal to consult on identified sites
- **Cabinet – 26th July 2023** – agree proposal to consult on identified sites
- **August - September 2023** - consult on identified site(s)
- **People Scrutiny Committee 5th October 2023** – report on outcome of consultation and make site(s) recommendation for proceeding.
- **Cabinet 8th November 2023** – agree site(s) to progress for potential development
- **December 2023 Onwards:**
 - Progress with incorporating identified site(s) into the Replacement Local Development Plan
 - Engage with Travelling Ahead; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Advice & Advocacy Service, MCC Estates and Welsh Government.

3.6 It is proposed to appoint a specialist planning agency that supports and advocates for community involvement in planning, to facilitate the consultation on behalf of the Council.

4. **EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

4.1 No negative implications have been identified. See **Appendix 4**.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 The following options are available:

Option	Benefit	Risk
<p>Option 1: The <u>recommended option</u> is to recommend to Cabinet that the Council consult on suitable pieces of land for potential development for Gypsy & Traveller pitch provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This contributes to the Council's legal responsibilities to meet identified Gypsy & Traveller pitch needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is possible there may be community objection to any proposed development of Council owned land for Gypsy & Traveller sites. There will be future financial implications associated with continuing to evaluate and finalise suitability eg land contamination investigation There will be future financial implications associated with any final decisions relating to developing and managing a proposed site, although it is anticipated that Welsh Government capital grant will be available.
<p>Option 2: To recommend to Cabinet that the Council consult on a <u>smaller</u> selection of these suitable pieces of land for potential development for Gypsy & Traveller pitch provision (eg consult on one, two or three of the pieces of land rather than four).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will still contribute positively to the Council's legal responsibilities to meet identified Gypsy & Traveller pitch needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is possible there may be community objection to any proposed development of Council owned land for Gypsy & Traveller sites. Subject to final decisions, this option will impact on the number of pitches the Council will be able to provide and it reduces the likelihood of the Council meeting the whole identified need (eg 13 pitches) for Monmouthshire. There will be future financial implications associated with any final decisions relating to developing and managing a proposed site, although it is anticipated that Welsh Government capital grant will be available.

Option	Benefit	Risk
<p>Option 3: To not recommend any of the pieces of land to Cabinet to formally consult upon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No benefits with this option, although the Council still may conclude that none of the pieces of land are suitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would impact on the Council meeting its legal responsibilities to meet identified pitch provision need.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The Council has a duty under Part 3, Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to address unmet need for mobile home pitches where identified. Using Council owned land is one option for meeting identified need.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The estimated cost of appointing a specialist planning agency to consult on the potential land options is approximately £4,000, subject to the final number of pieces of land evaluated as suitable for development by the Workshop. This will be funded from the Housing & Communities budget.
- 7.2 Subject to a final decision on consulting on Council owned pieces of land, there will be further revenue implications relating to undertaking air quality and noise assessments and land contamination investigation, to continue evaluating land for suitability.
- 7.3 Although not relating to this report and any decision to consult on Council owned land for potential future pitch provision development, there will be capital and revenue cost implications relating to any decision to develop pitch provision. The Council would engage with Welsh Government in respect of capital grant availability.

8. CONSULTEES:

- 8.1 Cabinet; Senior Leadership Team; Communities & Place DMT; Housing Management Team; Travelling Ahead - Gypsy & Traveller Advocates; Principal Environmental Health Officer; Snr Landscape and Urban Officer; Biodiversity & Ecology Lead; Highways Development Manager; Head of Planning

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Welsh Government Site Design Guide 2015

10. **AUTHOR:** Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager

11. **CONTACT DETAILS:** Tel: 01633 644479
Email: ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Provision Land (MCC Owned Land) Identification and Evaluation

20th July 2022, People Scrutiny Committee - proposal for identifying sites and approach for member and Committee involvement considered.

Stage 1

- Preliminary Identification of all MCC Land and Assets – desktop exercise by officers. An appraisal of **All** MCC owned land, giving regard to Welsh Government Site Design Guide 2015.
- Approximately 1500 council assets considered and reviewed. Land removed:
 - Asset is a MCC property;
 - Cemetery Land; Allocations in the existing adopted LDP;
 - Tree Planting Scheme;
 - Woodland;
 - Covered by a ground lease;
 - Council Car Park; Footpath/road

Stage 2 – Further land removed relating to the following:

- Site is less than 500sqm – desired pitch size is min 500sqm for public sites. [A pitch capable of accommodating an amenity block, mobile home, caravan and parking for two vehicles];
 - Equipped Children's Play Area;
 - Playing Fields (Pitch);
 - County Farm Holdings;
 - Allocations in the existing adopted LDP/ RLDP promotion sites;
 - Known unfavourable topography;
 - Woodland areas that were missed on Stage 1;
 - C1 & C2 Flood Risk – known sites in flood risk removed;
 - Sites with any uncertain inputs have been carried forward to the next stage for further assessment
- Approximately 70 sites remained from 1500 sites

Stage 3 – assess flood risk as per updated TAN 15. Land removed due to:

- Sites wholly or mostly in Zones 2 & 3 of updated TAN15 maps (sea and river)
 - Sites where boundary could potentially be amended to remove site out of flood risk kept on list
- Surface water flood risk highlighted for further assessment
- Any constraints identified in Stage 1 & 2 if picked up at Stage
- Brecon Beacons National Park Plan
- Within and adjacent to Conservation Areas and/or Historic Park & Garden
- Enclosed/surrounded by built environment privacy and amenity / placemaking
- National Ecological designations eg SSSI

- Approximately 50 sites remained

Stage 4 - RAG Evaluation of Land - this exercise reduced the sites for potential consideration down to 9 pieces of land. The methodology used included desk-top evaluation, site visits, internal service consultation, Gypsy & Traveller community consultation undertaken by Travelling Ahead and feedback from Travelling Ahead themselves.

17 areas of land evaluated against the following RAG criteria:

Site Area	Ecological Designation on whole or part of site (SSSI, SINCR, SAC, RAMSAR, national/local nature reserve)
Ability to provide utility infrastructure	
Flood Zone (Updated TAN 15 Flood Maps)	Proximity to ecological designation
Within or adjoining a Settlement Boundary	Landscape Sensitivity (as recorded in the Landscape Sensitivity Study)
Greenfield/Brownfield	Mineral Safeguarding Area
Surrounded by Built Development	Proximity to potential 'bad neighbours' e.g. dual carriageways, trunk roads, motorway, railway, industrial estates)
Potential for expansion	
Within BBNP or AONB	Contamination (as recorded on Monmaps)
Within Green Wedge or potential Green Belt	School Proximity
Within Phosphates Catchment Area	Medical Facility Proximity
Adopted LDP DES2 Allocation	Proximity to other Amenities
DES2 in Review	Public transport proximity and frequency
Within/adjacent to Conservation Area or Historic Parks & Garden	Proximity to Historical Designation (inc Listed Buildings and Con Areas)
Within Archeologically Sensitive Area	Topography
Permanency	Access

- **29th September 2022, Member Workshop 1** – to communicate to all members the Council's Gypsy & Traveller responsibilities, advise of the identified unmet need and provide an update on site sifting work undertaken to date and the approach taken (which had identified 17 sites for further consideration). To enable further sifting of Council owned land, a proposed approach to RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rate land was considered. **See Appendix 2** for an overview of evaluation criteria. The Workshop recommended that the proposed RAG be used to further evaluate 17 pieces of Council owned land.

The Workshop also recommended Gypsy & Traveller awareness training be arranged for members and officers.




- Application of RAG, reduced 17 pieces of land to 9 pieces of land
- **3rd November 2022, Member Workshop 2** - 9 pieces of land were shared and discussed at the Workshop. The Workshop recommended that these 9 pieces of land should remain in the process for continued evaluation.
- **Officer Acquisition of Preliminary Feedback** – feedback received from internal services, Travelling Ahead – Gypsy & Traveller Advocates and the Gypsy & Traveller community (undertaken on behalf of the Council by Travelling Ahead).
- **30th January 2023, Member & Officer Gypsy & Traveller Awareness Training** – facilitated by Travelling Ahead.

Stage 5

- **4th July 2023 – Members Workshop 3** - consider 9 remaining sites and whether to leave in process and recommend consulting on possible development or remove from process.

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Gypsy & Traveller Site Identification – MCC Land Evaluation

MCC Land - Dancing Hill x 1.85, Undy	
Site Size – Approx 12,738 m ²	Pitch Capacity – sufficient to meet MCC's pitch needs* *The site has the capacity for more pitches, but these are not needed. Sites above approx. 5 or 6 pitches are not recommended
General Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban • The land forms part of the Council's County Farms estate and is occupied via a grazing license. It is anticipated this license would need to be terminated/amended should the site be supported for this use • Former Dancing Hill Landfill Site 1940-60. • The land is classed as high risk for human health in MCC's contaminated land prioritisation list. Development of this land could not be undertaken without planning conditions requiring contaminated land site investigation and remediation. • Level • Residential adjacent to southern boundary. M4 to north of site • Access off Dancing Hill/Grange Road. • Tree Preservation Orders on northern boundary. • Trees bordering the boundary • Opposite to the west of the other Dancing Hill x 0.85 land 	
Ward – Magor East with Undy	
Photo's <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;">    </div>	



Strengths

- Level land
- Scope to create a margin between existing homes
- Future scope to expand – subject to original development size (sites above 5 or 6 aren't recommended)

Weaknesses

- Adjoins existing homes to east and south
- Proximity to M4 – noise and potential pollution. Traffic and noise assessments/surveys would be needed given the proximity of the M4 - a TAN 11 Noise assessment to establish whether this site is suitable having regard to the existing background noise levels.
- Mineral safeguarding area
- Former landfill site and is currently classed as high risk for human health in MCC's contaminated land prioritisation list.
- DES2 Amenity land
- Greenfield
- Existing access is unsuitable, but an alternative access is considered achievable from Grange Road where the site directly abuts Grange Road at its widest point. Traffic assessment would be required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be a loss to the current grazing licence holder who would need to be served notice to terminate/amend their existing license. • It is not known what the site currently contains and it is not known whether any remediation of the former landfill site use would be necessary
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the size of the land, there is scope to develop just a part of the site away from existing homes and M4. 	<p>Threats (Risk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential health risk • Potential cost of investigative work and remediation work
<p>Key Internal Feedback Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DES2 Amenity Landon approx half site • Greenfield • Environmental Health Comments - The site is on a former landfill site. Site is currently used for grazing and is classed as high risk for human health in the contaminated land prioritisation list. Land contamination investigations and potential remediation would need to be undertaken prior to use. TAN11 noise assessment required due to proximity to M4. 	
<p>Gypsy & Traveller Community Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good transport links are needed for work purposes. Supermarket deliveries and taxis will be needed. Near shops is helpful but not so near that kids can walk off into town on their own and get into trouble. • Not suitable as wish to remain in home community for school, employment and social reasons* <p><i>* This relates to one household and doesn't mean that it's not suitable for other families.</i></p>	
<p>Travelling Ahead Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not considered suitable as too close to existing properties and close to M4 in terms of noise and pollution. Site too small to create a margin between existing homes. 	
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Retain in process and put forward for consultation</p>

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Gypsy & Traveller Site Identification – MCC Land Evaluation

MCC Land – Garthi Close, Off Common Road, Mitchel Troy

Site Size – Approx 6,318 m²

Pitch Capacity – sufficient to meet MCC's pitch needs*

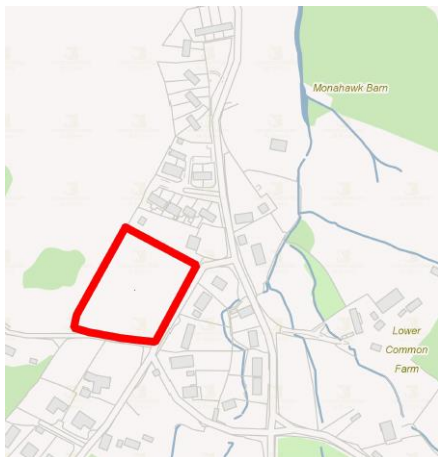
*The site has the capacity for more pitches, but these are not needed. Sites above approx. 5 or 6 pitches are not recommended

General Description

- Rural
- Situated about a mile from the main Mitchel Troy Road.
- Well screened to all elevations.
- To the south west of Mitchel Troy

Ward – Mitchel Troy

Photo's



<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well screened on all elevations • Relatively level area of land • Scope to create margin in respect of adjoining property eg develop to west of land. • Scope to develop towards the west elevation, away from nearby homes. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary of land is reasonably close to a number of existing homes to three of the elevations. • Greenfield • Wye Valley AONB • River Wye Catchment • Site is bounded by native species hedge. To create access, some hedging would need to be removed
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	<p>Threats (Risk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential detrimental impact on native species relating to required hedge removal.
<p>Key Internal Feedback Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenfield • Within Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty • Within River Wye catchment and, therefore, phosphate implications • GI - Site is not suitable. To create suitable access a significant section of existing hedge would need to be removed. Based on the proposed layout for settlement, location, impact on character setting and the qualities of Monmouthshire's landscape as well as the Wye Valley, AONB the site is not suitable. • Ecology - The site is bounded by native species hedge, part of the hedgerow will need to be removed to permit access. The quality of the habitats is unknown without surveys but it is likely that the hedgerow will meet priority criteria and there is potential for priority grassland. It is recommended that the required hedgerow loss would make this site unsuitable for proposed development. 	
<p>Gypsy & Traveller Community Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to get Planning the further you are away from other people due to hostility. Putting sites near to settled community doesn't work. Feeling mutual of not wanting to live near each other (ie Travellers and the settled population) • Not suitable as wish to remain in home community for school, employment and social reasons* <p><i>* This relates to one household and doesn't mean that it's not suitable for other families.</i></p>	
<p>Travelling Ahead Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive that it's not too close to too many existing homes and there is scope to develop the north/westerly side of the site and create a good margin. This site shouldn't go forward together with the Rocklea site. Site more preferable than Rocklea site. Being a larger area of land creates flexibility. Shouldn't be 	

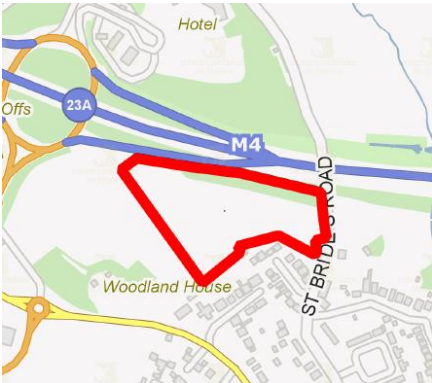

developed if the Rocklea land proceeds. The Garthi Close site is considered more suitable than the Rocklea land.

Recommendation

Retain in process for consideration by Members Workshop

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Gypsy & Traveller Site Identification – MCC Land Evaluation

MCC Land – Langley Close, Magor	
Site Size – Approx 23,431m ²	Pitch Capacity – sufficient to meet MCC's pitch needs* *The site has the capacity for additional pitches above the identified need, but these are not required. Large sites and provision above 5 or 6 units are not recommended.
General Description <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urban• Access off St Brides Road.• The land forms part of the Council's County Farms estate and is occupied via a grazing license. It is anticipated this license would need to be terminated/amended should the site be supported for this use• Residential properties adjoining southern boundary. M4 to the north, open land to east and west.• Tree belt around the site	
Ward – Magor West	
Photo's	
	
	



Strengths

- Level land
- Scope for expansion (within the context of not creating a large site)
- Ability to create a margin between homes and M4
- New access can be created on St Brides Close

Weaknesses

- Greenfield
- Mineral safeguarding area
- Existing access is not suitable
- Traffic and noise assessments/surveys would be needed given the proximity of the M4 - a TAN 11 Noise assessment to establish whether this site is suitable having regard to the existing background noise levels.
- Woodland along M4 corridor may support Dormouse, reptiles, birds and lizards
- Adjacent to existing homes
- There would be a loss to the current grazing licence holder who would need to be served notice to terminate/amend their existing license.
-

Opportunities

Threats (Risk)

- Close to M4 – air and noise pollution

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the size of the land, there is scope to develop just a part of the site away from existing homes and M4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible risk of land contamination eg unrecorded waste disposal from nearby housing development or disposal of made ground or parking from heavy vehicles/equipment.
<p>Key Internal Feedback Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenfield • Mineral Safeguarding area • Land should be investigated for possible land contamination, and if necessary remediated prior to introducing a receptor. 	
<p>Gypsy & Traveller Community Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good transport links are needed for work purposes. Supermarket deliveries and taxis will be needed. Near shops is helpful but not so near that kids can walk off into town on their own and get into trouble. Easier to get Planning the further you are away from other people due to hostility. Putting sites near to settled community doesn't work. • Not suitable as wish to remain in home community for school, employment and social reasons* <p><i>* This relates to one household and doesn't mean that it's not suitable for other families.</i></p>	
<p>Travelling Ahead Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although close to existing homes, considered a possible option due to the ability to develop the site from the west to centre and create a margin to the existing homes. Being a sizeable site creates flexibility. Near M4 so issue of pollution and noise. 	
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Retain in process for consideration by Members Workshop</p>

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Gypsy & Traveller Site Identification – MCC Land Evaluation

MCC Land – Manson Heights, Monmouth

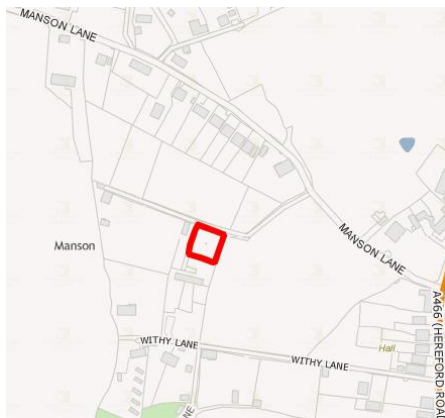
Site Size – Approx 775 m²

Pitch Capacity – 1 pitch max

General Description

- Rural
- Level site
- Currently open space. Hedged and well screened to North and East elevations.
- Situated to the north of 3 x Manson Height properties, two of which would adjoin the site.
- Easily accessed from Manson Heights. However, access to Manson Heights is via Manson Heights and Manson Lane – very narrow single-track lanes from the A466.

Ward – Osbaston





<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May suit an individual family • Existing screening in place x 2 elevations • Level site 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of a former Isolation Hospital for infectious diseases, likely 1905-64. The land is prioritised on the Councils Contaminated Land inspection strategy as a category E (low priority for further inspection). Should any type of accommodation be built on the land, (without site investigation and, if necessary, remediation) the site would become a category B (medium-high priority). • Narrow single-track lane access. May have implications for developing and decommissioning • Adjoins existing homes • Minimal margin between adjoining homes • No scope to expand
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being allocated to one family – no risk of other families arriving • Could be sold to a household. 	<p>Threats (Risk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential health risk • Potential cost of investigative work and remediation work
<p>Key Internal Feedback Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenfield site 	

- Within Wye catchment so phosphate implications
- Land contamination investigation should be undertaken to evaluate potential suitability

Gypsy & Traveller Community Comments

- Easier to get Planning consent the further you are away from other people due to hostility. Putting sites near to settled community doesn't work. Feeling mutual of not wanting to live near each other (ie Travellers and the settled population). Easier to get Planning the further you are away from other people due to hostility.
- Not suitable as wish to remain in home community for school, employment and social reasons*

** This relates to one household and doesn't mean that it's not suitable for other families.*

Travelling Ahead Comments

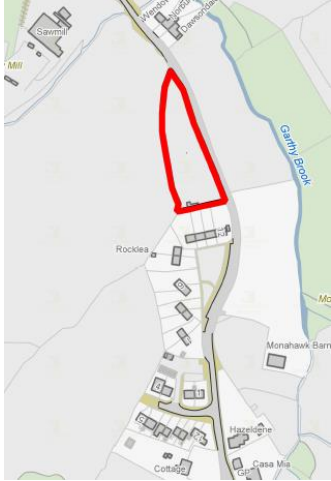




- Not suitable. Too close to existing homes. Existing screening on two elevations is good. The provision of just one pitch may be less economical. MCC is advised to aim for sites that can accommodate 5/6 pitches

Recommendation

Retain in process for consideration by Members Workshop

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Gypsy & Traveller Site Identification – MCC Land Evaluation

MCC Land – Rocklea, Common Road, Mitchel Troy	
Site Size – Approx 3035 m ²	Pitch Capacity – 5 x pitches max
General Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural • Situated about a mile from the main Mitchel Troy Road, adjoining Common Road • The site is grassland and currently sites a number of small timber sheds/out-buildings • Well screened to East and North elevations. 	
Ward – Mitchel Troy	
Photo's <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;">    </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	
Strengths	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently no access – to create access would result in hedge removal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not too large and size aligns with Travelling Ahead comments about ideal size. • Size is potentially helpful for management purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The layout of the footprint may result in the capacity being less than 5 pitches because of the shape and potential development requirements eg the need to create access, creating a margin between the adjoining properties • Immediately adjacent to 4 existing properties, which back on to the land. • Greenfield • No scope for future expansion although sites above 5 or 6 not being recommended
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	<p>Threats (Risk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detrimental impact on native species relating to required hedge removal.
<p>Key Internal Feedback Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenfield • Within Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty • Within River Wye catchment and, therefore, phosphate implications • No scope for future expansion • GI - Site not suitable. To create a suitable visibility splay a section of existing hedge, trees and ground would need to be removed. Not acceptable from a landscape and GI perspective. • Ecology - Site not suitable. Site is bounded by native species hedge, part of the hedgerow will need to be removed to permit access. The quality of the habitats is unknown without surveys, but it is likely that the hedgerow will meet priority criteria and there is potential for priority grassland. 	
<p>Gypsy & Traveller Community Comments – Collated by Travelling Ahead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to get Planning the further you are away from other people due to hostility. Putting sites near to settled community doesn't work. Mutual feeling of not wanting to live near each other (ie Travellers and the settled population) • Not suitable as wish to remain in home community for school, employment and social reasons* <p><i>* This relates to one household and doesn't mean that it's not suitable for other families.</i></p>	
<p>Travelling Ahead Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very close to existing homes. Although there is scope to develop the northern part of the site to create a margin, but that impacts on the capacity and economical viability of the site. Current screening is generally good. Shouldn't be developed if the Garthi Close site proceeds. The Garthi Close site is considered more suitable than this site. 	
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Retain in process for consideration by Members Workshop</p>

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<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Ian Bakewell</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644479 E-mail: ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>Meeting The Unmet Pitch Needs of the Gypsy & Traveller Assessment January 2021</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Housing & Communities</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>7th July 2023 updating 31st August 2021 Version</p>

1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The service will positively contribute	There are no negative impacts in relation to this proposal	The Council has and will continue to do so, engage with the Travelling Ahead advocacy service
Disability	As above	As above	As above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	As above	As above	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	As above	As above
Race	As above	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	As above	As above	As above
Sex	As above	As above	As above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation	As above	As above	As above

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions. This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>It is recognised that Gypsy & Travellers can be disadvantaged in part, due to lack of stable accommodation, including available permanent pitch provision, resulting in a more transient lifestyle due to the need to regularly move on.</p> <p>This can be detrimental to community inclusion including accessing (or retaining) employment/training opportunities and accessing financial services eg insurance.</p> <p>Good quality permanent pitch provision also supports wider priorities such education, particularly for children and young people, as health and well-being.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.</p>	<p>The Council has previously established a pitch waiting list and allocation policy in potential readiness for pitch provision. This, however, needs to be publicised. This provides a mechanism for households to apply for future pitches.</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language.



How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably	The Council has a pitch allocation policy and it is appropriate to establish a bi-lingual version.	None	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Neutral impact. This proposal does not involve the appointment of staff. There has been Gypsy & Travelling training and awareness to support members and officers.	None	N/A
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Whilst the current proposal to consult on potential pitch provision has a neutral impact, in the longer term, the aim is to establish Gypsy & Traveller pitch provision. This is an opportunity to promote the Welsh Language eg signage, agreements, welcome packs etc	None	N/A



4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!


Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Meeting the pitch needs of Gypsy & Traveller households creates stability for households and enables them to establish firm links with local communities eg schools, employment.</p> <p>It reduces the likelihood of unauthorized encampments and the associated resource implications of dealing with such.</p>	<p>We will involve and liaise with Travelling Ahead G & T advocates</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p>	<p>There may be a possible opportunity to give consideration to this in respect of the design of a possible public provision</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Facilitating pitch provision supports good quality accommodation for G & T households which is conducive to good health and well-being and helps tackle health inequalities.</p> <p>It also supports households being able to access health services eg GP's, dentists, opticians etc</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities</p>	<p>Good pitch provision remain living at home and within their home communities. It eliminates the need for G & T to b</p>	<p>A pitch waiting list policy is already in place</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected		
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	N/A	N/A.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Public pitches provide the opportunity to promote the Welsh Language	N/A
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The proposals directly supports equality and protected and or disadvantaged groups.	Ditto

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term future</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The proposal is informed by a Gypsy & Traveller Assessment Jan 21, which makes population projections up to 2033.</p> <p>Planning for pitch provision helps to reduce the likelihood of unauthorised encampments. If the resulting outcome to meet need is public provision, households will be able to apply to live there</p>	<p>The continued engagement with Travelling Ahead advocacy service.</p> <p>Future Gypsy & Traveller pitch assessments.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The proposals will be developed with Welsh Government and Gypsy & Traveller advocates including Travelling Ahead and potentially a specialist planning consultant.</p> <p>The Council if applicable will engage with Welsh Government in respect of potential funding.</p> <p>Although not applicable at present, but there could be scope to include other organisations eg RSL's, although no decision has been made at present,</p>	<p>Gypsy & Traveller Households themselves are key stakeholders. It's important that households want to live on potential pitches provided by the Council</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The proposal facilitates greater involvement with local G & T households.</p> <p>There is a particular opportunity for involving families in the design of new sites</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The proposal supports preventative activity from the perspective of households having a stable homes (eg pitches) enabling households to better access facilities eg employment, education, health etc and community links</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p data-bbox="237 555 376 587">Integration</p> <p data-bbox="203 608 528 746">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p data-bbox="589 312 1312 451">The proposal supports increased access to good quality pitch provision that helps to provide safety, security and stability that also supports all aspects of well-being eg physical health, medical health etc</p> <p data-bbox="589 480 1290 576">The direct benefits this has for the Gypsy & Travellers is that accommodation supports the priorities of wider agencies such as health services</p>	<p data-bbox="1335 312 1995 408">The proposal will build upon existing services that support well-being which Gypsy & Traveller households would be supported to access.</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	The proposal supports households where there could be safeguarding issues by providing safe and secure pitch provision.	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	The proposal supports Corporate Parenting by potentially providing safe and secure pitch provision. If needed or applicable, it also supports the development of positive engagement and a relationship between any families and the Council due to there being no requirement to move on, perhaps, from an unauthorised encampment.	None.	N/A

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

<p>Gypsy & Traveller Assessment January 2021</p> <p>Feedback from advocacy support services</p>

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

<i>.This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template</i>
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The main benefits of the proposal are:

- It seeks to address unmet pitch need identified by the Gypsy & Traveller Assessment Jan '21
- The Council will be meeting its legal responsibilities under Part 3, Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- It supports the Gypsy & Traveller requirement relating to the development of the replacement Local Development Plan

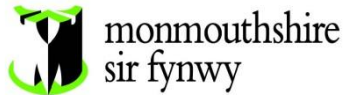
9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Officer Meeting – Site identification	13 th Aug 21 – completed	Mark Hand,
Officer Meeting – Site identification	19 th Aug 21 - completed	Mark Hand
Report to Enterprise DMT	6 th Sept 21	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager
Report to Adults Select - Update report	21 st September 21	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager
Report to People Scrutiny	20 th July 2022	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager
Members Workshop	29 th September 2022	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager
Members Workshop	3 rd November 2022	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager

Members Workshop	4 th July 2023	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager
Report to People Scrutiny	19 th July 2023	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager
Report to Cabinet	26 th July 2023	Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities
Consultation	September 2023	

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built-in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Report to Enterprise DMT	06.09.21	
2.	Report to People Scrutiny in preparation for Report to Cabinet	19.07.23	Utilised up to date template and updated on timeline. No changes otherwise



SUBJECT: Draft Home to School Transport Policy 2024/5
MEETING: People Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 19th July 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the legal responsibilities for the provision of school transport. Within the legislation they place a duty on local authorities to review their transport policy on an annual basis. The policy needs to be confirmed by the 1st October for application in the following academic year.
- 1.2 Public consultation concluded on the 29th June and the feedback will inform an amended draft policy which will be presented to Cabinet in September. The purpose of this report is to provide scrutiny Members with an opportunity to consider the feedback and proposed policy so that their views can be reflected in the final draft to be considered by Cabinet.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Committee consider the proposed Transport Policy 23/24 contained in Appendix 2 and provide recommendations for consideration to the Cabinet Member for Education.

3.0 KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The provision of home to school transport is prescribed by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008. The legislation imposes statutory duties on local authorities in the provision of home to school transport and the circumstances when transport must be provided. It also places a duty on all local authorities to undertake an annual review of the transport policy which sets out how the statutory responsibilities and any discretionary policies that are being applied. The transport policy should be agreed prior to the 1st October for application in the proceeding academic year.

- 3.2 A draft Transport Policy was presented to Cabinet in May of this year and public consultation was undertaken between 31st May and 29th June. There was a press release at the commencement of the consultation and there have been regular social media posts during its duration. In addition, all schools were provided with information on the consultation at the start of the process and were also asked to remind parents a week before the consultation closed. The Commissioning Team also contacted the parents and carers of existing users of the service to make them aware of the consultation.
- 3.3 A summary of the consultation responses has been included in Appendix 1 and can be broken down into **** themes, which are considered in detail below.

Free Transport for Faith Learners

- 3.3.1 We have received feedback from survey respondents and representatives of faith schools that the proposed drafting in the home to school transport policy is too narrow and was contradictory to the proposals outlined in the consultation. Respondents have largely not objected to the proposed policy change if the drafting reflects that there is no requirement for the school's faith to be the same as the learner.

Response

We have amended the drafting in the proposed policy to wider the eligibility criteria so that the learner does not have to have the same denominational faith as their chosen school. The eligibility criteria will only consider if the learner has been accepted by the school based on their faith criteria. If they do not meet the faith criteria, they will be assessed for transport based on their nearest suitable or catchment school.

Public Transport

- 3.3.2 One of the key changes proposed is to increase the use of public transport for secondary learners. The policy proposes to do this by aligning with Welsh Government's Llwybr Newydd Transport Strategy and adopting the transport hierarchy. We have received feedback opposing this approach which is largely summarised as follows:

- Safeguarding concerns as learners will be sharing the vehicles with passengers who do not have a DBS.
- The reliability and punctuality of service vehicles.
- Concerns that parents would feel the need to travel with their children as the transport is not dedicated school transport
- The impact on working parents

- Increased stress levels for parents and learners

Response

The Council has and continues to use public bus services for secondary learners. The same protocols that govern safeguarding equally apply on public service vehicles and drivers have a DBS. We acknowledge that traffic conditions can impact on the punctuality of buses, but this equally applies to home to school transport. Service operators have been contacted and they have worked with Monmouthshire's officers to amend service timetables to ensure that learners are dropped off and collected at schools at the correct times. We do not propose to issue parents with bus passes to travel with their children as the Learner Travel Measure assumes that only primary aged learners will need to be accompanied by a responsible officer and we will not be using public transport for primary aged learners.

Our experience to date is that travelling on public services does not increase the risk of safeguarding incidents, although we appreciate that parents and carers may hold that perception. We will work closely with operators to monitor the behaviour of passengers and review safeguarding measures and transport methods where substantiated concerns arise. This policy supports the reduction in home to school commissioned transport and the maintenance of public services within Monmouthshire. It aligns with Welsh Government's transport policies and the Corporate and Community plan.

Post 16 Travel

3.3.3 Respondents have requested that Post 16 travel should be free and available to all of those that require it. They are concerned that the lack of guaranteed Post 16 travel has a detrimental impact on those living in rural locations and those choosing to access Welsh medium education.

Response

We fully understand the concerns that have been expressed by respondents regarding the uncertainty of Post 16 travel. We appreciate that this uncertainty is a particular problem for Welsh and Faith learners who need to travel out of County and there are no direct public service bus routes. As a result, If parents apply for Post 16 concessionary travel for Welsh medium or Faith learners who are attending their nearest suitable school we will ensure that transport is available.

Schools Suitability

3.3.4 The consultation proposed the removal of the consideration of a schools special measures status when determining a learners nearest school. This currently only applies to learners who live in the Gilwern area whose nearest school is Brynmawr and their catchment school is King Henry VIII. Responses

have objected to the proposed change and have cited concerns that the proposal does not consider feeder school status; it deprives parents of choice; is anti-competitive; does not consider community cohesion and acts as a disincentive to schools to strive for better Estyn reports.

Response

The Learner Travel Measure places a duty on Local Authorities to provide home to school transport to a learner's nearest suitable school. There is no definition on suitable and this is instead left to the Local Authority to determine. The legislation does not impose any requirement for a Local Authority to consider feeder school status, community cohesion or the Estyn status of a school when determining a learner's nearest suitable school. Monmouthshire already exceeds the requirements by offering free transport to both the nearest and catchment school where they are not the same. The policy change would therefore provide clarity that the Commissioning Team will not assess the educational performance of a school when awarding transport and instead only consider the distance criteria, if it is a state funded school and if there are any specific individual circumstances, e.g. a request for Welsh medium or faith based education.

Available Walking Routes and Pick Up Points

- 3.3.5 We have received feedback challenging the requirement to walk to pick up points and the wider assessment of available walking routes. In particular it has been suggested that the assessment should have more regard for local views of the safety of roads and that there should be an on-going assessment to reflect any changes in circumstances. There was some concern over the proposal to reduce the notice period to one term when transport is being withdrawn as an available route has been identified.

Response

We do not consider it unreasonable to require learners to meet transport at a designated pick up point if there is a walking route available. In circumstances where there is no available walking route, feeder transport will be provided. Risk assessments are undertaken by qualified Highways colleagues and they follow the assessment process set out in the Learner Travel Measure and other road safety guidance. If parents or carers have a concern with the walking route they are able to ask for an assessment to be undertaken and we are grateful to those parents who report hazards such as brambles etc so that maintenance works can be undertaken. Assessments are undertaken on the basis that primary aged learners will be accompanied by an appropriate adult.

We acknowledge that the reduction in the notice period may impact some parents and carers who wish to accompany their primary aged children to

school. Individuals cases will be considered by the Commissioning team for short term discretionary transport for parents to put arrangements in place. If there is an available walking route and the distance is below the eligibility criteria it is the parents/carers responsibility to transport their children to and from school.

Other issues raised

3.3.6 Respondents queried whether any changes to the Transport Policy would impact on those learners already in receipt of transport. Others questioned whether learners would be required to use more than one vehicle and the impact that this would have on learners and on the viability of schools competing with their English counterparts.

Response

Where learners are already in receipt of free transport they will continue to receive transport unless an available walking route is made available. The Council is not proposing that learners will be asked to travel on two public service buses to travel to and from school. We do provide feeder transport for those learners who do not have an available route to a pick-up point and in those cases we will continue to provide feeder transport.

3.3.7 Respondents were asked to consider the impact of the proposals on the Welsh language. The comments received raise concerns over charging and availability of Post 16 transport, the length of journey times and the ability of learners to communicate in Welsh on transport. As outlined earlier in the report the Council will ensure that there is available concessionary transport for Welsh medium post 16 learners. Routes are assessed to ensure that travel times are no longer than 60 minutes for secondary learners.

3.3.8 Officers have considered all of the feedback received and proposed amendments to reflect the valuable contributions made by respondents.

4.0 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment is attached.

5.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Dis-benefits	Comments
Leave the Transport Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy will fail to 	This option should be

as originally drafted		<p>acknowledge the valuable contributions of the respondents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will have failed in its duty to consider the consultation responses. 	discounted as it falls short of the reasonable expectations of consultees and the standards required of an engaged and listening Council responses.
Agree to the amendments proposed following the consultation exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy has reflected on the views expressed by respondents and where reasonable and equitable to do so have made amendments to the drafting. The Council is open in its decision-making and holds true to its values. Respondents can see how their engagement has influenced the Councils decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	It is recommended that this option is progressed.

6.0 REASONS:

6.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure places a requirement on Local Authorities to review their Transport Policy. The proposed policy has been amended to reflect consultation responses.

6.2 The proposed policy exceeds the statutory duties placed on Local Authorities but is in line with current policy and practice. Given the current hardship being encountered by many families due to the cost of living crisis, it was not considered appropriate to consider a reversion to statutory distance criteria at this time.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The cost of school transport for the financial year 22/23 was circa £6,000,000. . This includes the cost of external provision and our in-house transport provider. School contracts for the 23/24 academic year have recently been re-tendered and we are in the process of awarding contracts.
- 7.2 Should we be successful in transitioning learners onto public bus services there will be a reduction in revenue generated from concessionary income as parents will purchase season tickets directly from the bus operator.
- 7.3 Due the nature of the transport market, the costs can change as contracts are handed back and re-tendered, new routes are added to accommodate new learners and contract uplifts to reflect the increasing cost of transport provision.

8 CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Monitoring Officer
S151 Officer

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014
Cabinet Report 3rd May 2023

10 AUTHOR:

Debra Hill-Howells Head of Decarbonisation, Transport & Support
Services

Debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Tel: 07775 851405

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Summary of Consultation Responses

1. Do you agree with some or all of the proposed changes:

Positive responses to:

- Retention of travel distances
- Promotion of active travel
- Use of public transport
- Positive approach to climate change & environment
- Maintaining more generous distance thresholds helps to prioritise worker hours and the economy

2. Do you disagree with some or all of the proposed changes

Faith

- Faith criteria too narrow in the draft document
- Should not be an eligibility requirement for attending faith schools
- Should retain existing policy and if a faith based school accepts the learner free transport should be provided.
- Proposed drafting will exclude multiple faith denominations

Post 16

- Lack of provision for Post 16

Schools suitability

- Object to the removal of “special status” when determining a school’s suitability
- Loss of free transport to send their child to another school outside their catchment area will deprive parents of choice, be anti-competitive and be a dis-incentive for schools to strive for better Estyn reports
- The proposed change has not been fully considered/ assessed and not justified and should therefore be rejected.
- Need to consider feeder school status as part of the suitable school determination.
- The impact on community cohesion is not considered within the EQIA and therefore this aspect should be re-assessed.

Use of Public Transport

- Do not agree with the use of public transport for primary aged pupils- safeguarding issues
- Should provide transport on the statutory mileage so all learners across Wales have the same access to transport
- Concerns over reliability and capacity of public buses
- Don't want learners on public transport as they would take up all of the vehicle capacity
- Public buses create a safeguarding risk
- Season tickets should be able to be used outside of school travel
- Public transport passengers (non-learners) will not be DBS checked
- Parents may not be able to work due to the journey being both uncertain and too long
- Parents should be provided with bus passes to accompany their children on public transport.
- Reduced availability of concessionary seats.
- Financial support for public bus services no longer needed
- Should risk assess for learner safety
- Buses should be partitioned for learners and non DBS passengers
- Schedules need to be 100% reliable to avoid a drop in attendance
- Should risk assess for knife based mental health/terrorism type scenarios as well as the societal surge in drug/alcohol related violence
- Public buses do not run at suitable times for learners, which may mean that some will have to pay for breakfast club . The inflexibility will mean that some will have to give up work which would result in a loss of working hours to the economy.
- Public buses are unsafe and their unreliability causes unreasonable levels of stress and long journey times for learners.
- Parents would have to travel with U14's as this age group is particularly vulnerable to grooming and assault by members of the public who are not DBS checked.
- Lack of bus shelters would be detrimental to the health of learners waiting for buses.
- All buses should have a chaperone
- Should not be using funds for essential school buses to support public buses

Available Walking Routes

- Do not agree that learners should have to walk to a pickup point
- Should not disregard the length of private roads and driveways when assessing distances

- Learners should not be asked to walk to pick up points if there are no safe walking routes
- Learners should be given free transport if there are no zebra crossings on their walking route
- Designate more safe walking routes to reduce requirement for transport
- One terms notice of an available walking route and the loss of free transport is too short.
- Learners should not be obligated to walk on wet pavements in lightening storms
- Transport should only be withdrawn if it will not cause hardship.
- Walking routes should be continually reviewed and a telephone number made available for parents to report issues such as overgrown brambles or if a route becomes socially dangerous.

Other

- Buses should have chaperones
- Should be providing access to bicycles and cycle proficiency courses and safe storage at schools
- Schools should introduce walking buses and signpost where lollipop staff are located
- Should not be providing free transport for Welsh language learners
- All learners should have access to free transport
- Would like additional pick-ups for after school clubs
- Should allow free transport for learners who have to move schools as a result of bullying
- Public transport needs to be more affordable and accessible
- If a catchment review results in changes all learners already accessing the free transport should continue to do so
- Council must support working parents by providing free home to school transport
- Should be a review of Glascoed catchment
- Should not increase journey times for faith, Welsh medium and special education settings.
- Taking more than one bus to school is unreasonable as increases the risk of learners being stranded and vulnerable if the second one is cancelled/delayed and increases journey times.
- If a family has two children and they have to travel on separate transport, parents cannot be in two places at one to drop off / pick up children from two different places.
- The proposed policy changes will increase vehicular movements and impact negatively on climate change
- Negatively impacts on parents who cannot drive, therefore they should have dedicated free school buses.

- Lack of free school transport may impact the viability of Faith and main stream schools, particularly when they compete with English schools.
- Unfair to provide free transport for Welsh medium learners and not Faith learners
- Should use the same vehicles to transport primary and secondary pupils.
- Need to ensure that budget is made available to maintain active travel routes and a risk assessment and any works required completed before September 2024.
- Not clear if the proposed changes will impact existing users of home to school transport

Q3 Are you a current user of transport (on line survey respondents only)

Yes: 59

No: 29

Q4 Do the proposed changes impact on the Welsh Language

- Long journey times impact on travel
- Learners should be able to communicate in Welsh on the vehicle
- Drivers should be able to speak Welsh
- Charging for Post 16 travel to Welsh medium schools is discriminatory as there isn't one in the county
- Lack of convenient transport to mainstream schools where Welsh is taught will result in parents exercising parental preference and choosing a school in England.
- Providing families with free Home-to-School Transport to Welsh medium schools and removing it from families whose own religious or philosophical convictions require them to send their children to faith schools would appear to be discrimination, and therefore not community building, in a county where the lives of many inherently straddle both country borders. Arguably, the value of learning the Welsh language is also diminished without the building up of a moral compass to use it wisely!

Q5 How can the proposals be improved to have a positive impact on the Welsh Language

- More dual language signs on bus transport
- Bilingual staff
- Retain the existing Faith policy criteria where the Welsh language is taught.

- Interest in Welsh and the art of learning EU and international languages in general, could be fostered by asking learners to greet Home-to-School contract drivers perhaps in Chinese on 'Mandarin Mondays', German on Tuesdays, the indigenous language on 'Welsh Wednesdays', Italian or Spanish on Thursdays, and 'Francais on Fridays'. Learners could be encouraged to play 'I Spy' in the language of the day enroute? This could serve as a fun game, and mental distraction eg from bus bullying due to boredom etc? While awaiting bus collection, again, learners could play 'I Spy' in the language of the day with their parents/guardians. ...It would certainly make a change from more usual number plate games etc, and encourage enhanced engagement from parents/guardians as well.
- Greetings etc should be undertaken in Welsh

Appendix 2 – Proposed Transport Policy

Monmouthshire County Council - Home to School Transport Policy 23/24

Introduction

This document sets out Monmouthshire County Councils (MCC) statutory duties to provide free home to school transport for children who live within the Monmouthshire County boundaries. If you do not pay council tax to MCC, please contact your Local Authority to find out how to apply for their home to school transport.

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008), places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide free home to school transport if certain eligibility criteria are met. Monmouthshire County Council has developed its transport guidance in accordance with this legislation to enable it to meet its statutory duties for learners up to and including year 11.

Free transport will only be available where a student fulfils the necessary criteria which will be explained in detail in this policy document. Parents should only apply for free home to school transport if they have read this guidance and ensured themselves that their children meet the criteria thresholds. If you have previously applied for free home to school transport and been refused, please do not reapply unless your personal circumstances have changed, e.g. you have moved to a new house or your children changed school.

The information given in this guidance relates to the 2024 – 2025 school year. This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure.

Contents

Monmouthshire County Council's Transport Policy	3
Nearest Suitable or Catchment School	3
Distance and how it is calculated	4
Transport for Children Under 5	4
Transport for Learners with Dual residencies	4
Looked After Children	4
Learners with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	5
Medical Conditions	5
Learners Changing Address During Years 10 & 11	5
Length of the Journey	6
Safe Walking Routes	6
Post 16 Travel	6
Concessionary Travel	7
Mode of Transport	7
Bus Passes	8
Additional Journeys	8
Right to Withdraw Transport	8
Behavioural Issues	8
Personal Transport Budgets	9
Unforeseen Circumstances	9
Complaints	9
Home to School Transport Appeals	10

Monmouthshire County Council's Transport Policy

All applications for home to school transport are assessed on an individual basis by the Commissioning Team.

To qualify for free home to school transport a child must attend their nearest suitable state funded or catchment school **and** that school must be over the MCC distance criteria. Free home to school transport will not be provided unless a learner meets both criteria.

Nearest Suitable or Catchment School

The Learner Travel Measure defines nearest suitable school as a school where the 'education or training provided is suitable having regard for the age, ability and aptitudes of the learner and any learning difficulties he or she may have'.

In determining whether a school is suitable it will consider:

- Age appropriateness – relating to attendance at a Primary or Secondary School
- Ability appropriateness – relating to attendance at a mainstream, welsh medium or faith school.
- Special education requirements – if a learner has a statement of special education needs (SEN) which specifies a school.

The nearest suitable school for Transport purposes will be the state-maintained school which is closest to the applicant's home. Where parents have applied for welsh medium or faith education, the same nearest and catchment criteria will apply. A learner's catchment school is defined by the Access Unit. Further information on catchment areas

can be found by accessing [School catchment areas - Monmouthshire](#).

Whilst parents are free to exercise parental preference when selecting their preferred school, free home to school transport will not be provided if the preferred school is not their nearest suitable school (see 1.40 & 1.46 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure) or catchment school. When assessing the nearest suitable school, the Commissioning Team will consider schools that are outside of the Council's administrative boundary.

When assessing suitability for Transport purposes the Council will not consider parental preferences, if a school has a poor Estyn report or is in special measures or parental concerns with a specific school.

If your nearest suitable school is full, eligibility will be assessed on the basis of the next nearest suitable school that has availability to accept the learner. The same distance eligibility criteria will apply.

Where a learner has to move schools due to incidents of bullying, free transport will only be provided where the Education Welfare Service or Access Unit have been involved and supported the change of schools. Evidence will need to be provided by either the Education Welfare Service or Access Unit to support the request for transport.

Where a younger sibling applies to attend the same school as an older sibling that receives free transport this does not guarantee that the younger sibling will receive it. Each learner is assessed on an individual basis according to the prevailing policy.

Available walking routes are continually reviewed to reflect changes to the local footpath infrastructure. If an assessment results in a route that was previously designated as unsafe being re-categorised as

available, home to school transport will be withdrawn from the start of the next academic term. The delay in withdrawing the provision is to provide parents and learners with the opportunity to prepare for the change.

No transport will be provided for a learner attending a fee paying mainstream independent school.

Distance Criteria and how it is Calculated

A learner's school must be over the prescribed distance for learners to be eligible for free home to school transport.

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure provides minimum statutory walking distances of 2 miles for primary aged learners and 3 miles for secondary aged pupils. Monmouthshire County Council, however, has chosen to improve the statutory provision and has instead adopted the following distance criteria for all eligible learners:

- Primary aged learners – free home to school transport will be provided if the distance between the nearest suitable school and the learner's home is 1.5 miles or more.
- Secondary aged learners – free home to school transport will be provided if the distance between the nearest suitable school and the learner's home is 2 miles or more.

The Council will determine your nearest suitable school via the shortest available walking route. This will be measured using a Digital Information Mapping System from the point your property meets the adopted highway to the nearest available entrance to the school. A walking route will be considered available if it is safe (as far as is reasonably practicable) for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone

or with an accompanying adult if the learner's age or understanding requires this.

Free transport may also be provided where the Authority is satisfied that the route between home and school is sufficiently dangerous to warrant such provision, even though the distance is below the prescribed 1.5 miles (primary) and 2 miles (secondary). As part of its assessment the Authority would have regard to the degree of danger involved and whether the accompanying adult is at risk from the traffic situation.

Discretionary Transport for Learners attending Faith and Welsh Medium Schools

Free transport will be provided to learners attending their nearest faith school subject to:

- Distance eligibility criteria being met
- The learner has met the faith admission criteria for their preferred school.

The Commissioning Unit may consult with schools to confirm that learners have met the faith admission criteria.

Learners attending Welsh medium education will be provided with free transport to their nearest suitable school, subject to meeting the distance eligibility criteria.

Transport for Children Under 5

The provision of free home to school transport is a statutory requirement for those learners aged 5 to 16. Transport for 4-year olds is discretionary and will only be provided if a learner is attending primary school and the parent confirms in writing that a driver and or passenger assistant is authorised to assist their child with the use of seatbelts.

Booster seats will not be provided for younger learners. A parent can however provide a booster seat for their child should they wish to do so.

Transport is not provided for learners attending nursery school.

Transport hierarchy and the allocation of transport

The Council has adopted the transport hierarchy outlined in Welsh Governments Transport Strategy, Llwybr Newydd. Where a learner has been assessed to be entitled to free home to school transport, the following transport hierarchy will be applied:

- i. *Public transport* – wherever possible learners attending secondary education facilities will be provided with a bus pass to travel on public bus services.
- ii. *Home to School transport* – will be provided for primary aged learners and where no public bus provision is available. Learners will be asked to meet transport at agreed pick up/drop off points, which will not be more than a mile from their home address. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children get to and from the designated pick up/drop off point.
- iii. *Feeder transport* will only be provided if designated pick up and drop off points are more than a mile (private driveways and roads will be disregarded when calculating distances).

Transport for Learners with Dual Residences

Where learners have more than one residence, they will be able to apply for home to school transport for up to two homes which are the nearest to their school. They will still need to meet the eligibility criteria in

terms of distance, age and ability as outlined above. Evidence of the dual residency will be required from both parents which confirm the shared care arrangement. Where a learner lives with one parent but has contact with another parent, transport will only be provided to the learners' primary address.

Looked After Children

Where children are looked after by the Council, the same distance criteria to their nearest suitable school will apply.

Learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), i.e. a Statement of SEN or an IDP

Transport for children with ALN who do not meet the eligibility criteria will only be funded by the authority:

- to take a child to their nearest suitable or catchment school if he or she has major mobility problems, or
- if a child attends specialist provision (a special school or Specialist Resource Base) which has been approved by Monmouthshire County Council and the school is named in the learners IDP/Statement.

Transport will not be provided for children with additional learning needs (ALN) if the child is attending a school due to parental preference, i.e. a school that is not considered by the Local Authority to be the nearest suitable school. Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) or petrol expenses to cover mileage expenses are provided in exceptional circumstances and for time limited periods e.g. if there is no existing route. Time is required to commission this.

Free transport is only available to post 16 SEN pupils if they attend a specialist school or Specialist Resource Base (SRB). Free transport is not available to those learners attending further education within a mainstream school.

Medical Conditions

To qualify for assistance on medical grounds, the learner must be attending their nearest suitable or catchment school.

If a learner's medical needs affect their ability to travel to and from school accompanied as necessary by an adult, parents must provide supporting evidence from their child's consultant. The evidence should detail the difficulties that the learner will experience walking or travelling by public transport.

If transport is granted on medical grounds, the learner's case will be reviewed on an annual basis and up to date evidence on their medical condition will be required at each review. If up to date medical evidence is not provided transport will be withdrawn.

If a parent has a medical condition that prevents them from taking their primary aged children to and from school, discretionary transport may be provided. Parents must provide evidence of their medical condition from their consultant and their child must be attending their nearest suitable or catchment school.

Discretionary transport granted because of a parent's medical condition will be reviewed on an annual basis and up to date evidence of their medical condition will need to be provided for their review. If up to date medical evidence is not provided, then the discretionary transport will be withdrawn.

Discretionary transport will not be provided to secondary aged learners because of a parent's medical condition as it is expected that the

learner will be able to travel to and from school without parental assistance.

Learners Changing Address During Year 10/11

If a learner changes their home address whilst studying for their GCSE exams in either years 10 or 11, they will be entitled to free home to school transport if they meet the following criteria:

- The school they attend was the nearest suitable or catchment school for their previous address.
- Evidence of their new address
- That their new address is more than 2 miles from their school.

If the learner attends a school that was not their previous nearest suitable or catchment school, they will not be provided with free home to school transport for their new address. If, however their new address does mean that the school they are attending is now their nearest or catchment school they will be able to apply for transport in the normal way.

Length of the Journey

The Council will ensure that journeys are planned in such a way to minimise travel times. There is also the need however, to maximise limited public resources by maximising vehicle occupancy which may impact on journey times. Where possible, journey travel times will be a maximum of 60 minutes for mainstream secondary aged pupils and 45 minutes for mainstream primary aged pupils. For those learners attending welsh medium, faith or special education settings, journey times may be more than an hour dependent on the location of the education setting.

It may not be possible for all learners to be collected from their home address and

therefore it will be necessary for parents to take and collect their children from designated pick up and drop off points. Every effort will be made to keep this distance as short as possible and it should not exceed 1 mile under normal circumstances.

Parents are responsible for the safe travel and safeguarding of their children from their home to the agreed pick up and drop off points.

If there is no available walking route to the pick-up point, transport will be provided

Available Walking Routes

All walking routes are assessed based on the Learner Travel Measure and GB Road Safety Guidance.

Walking route assessments will be undertaken by the Councils Road Safety Officer or other suitably qualified person who will consider both the traffic and social risk factors. When undertaking the assessments, it will be assumed that an adult will accompany all primary aged children.

Copies of walking risk assessments will be made available to parents or learners on request.

Requests for routes to be assessed should be made to the Commissioning Team. Any maintenance concerns about an available walking route should be notified to the Commissioning Team on 01633 644777.

Post 16 Transport

The Council does not provide free transport to any learners over the age of 16 at the start of the academic year, unless specified by a statement of SEN.

Post 16 mainstream learners will have the opportunity to apply for concessionary travel, but this will be dependent on the availability

of seats, that there are no additional financial implications to the Council, no disruption to the transport route and the learner meets the vehicle at a point determined by the transport provider.

Post 16 concessionary seats are not guaranteed to be awarded from the start of the academic year; however, all learners will be notified if a seat is available within 10 working days of the commencement of the academic year. Learners attending Welsh medium or faith schools outside of the County area will be provided with concessionary travel. Applications should be received before the end of June so that transport can be arranged prior to the commencement of the academic year.

If an application is made during the school year, the applicant will be notified if a seat is available within 10 working days. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that learners are transported to and from school whilst their application is being considered.

If a concessionary seat is awarded, learners will be collected from a specified point that may be different from any previous pick up and collection points and be in excess of a mile, but no further than two miles from their home.

Learners will not be authorised to use a concessionary seat until it has been officially confirmed in writing by the Commissioning Team.

Pupils allocated a concessionary seat midway through a term will be charged per week for the number of weeks remaining in that term. Payment may be paid in monthly instalments via a standing order by contacting the Sundry Debtor Team upon receiving an invoice.

On occasions it may be necessary to withdraw a concessionary seat, if the seat is withdrawn then we will provide 10 working days' notice and parents will be required to make alternative arrangements.

Applications for Post 16 concessionary transport will not be considered for learners who are in arrears for previous concessionary transport. When the arrears are cleared the learner will then become eligible for concessionary travel if a seat is available. Accounts will be checked regularly and where no attempt at payment has been made then we will provide notice that the seat has been withdrawn.

The seat will be awarded for 33 weeks only, however if learners need to travel during the study or exam period they can do so at no extra charge

Refunds will be payable from the date that the Commissioning Team receive written confirmation from the parent that they wish to cancel their child's seat. Retrospective refunds will not be made.

If a Post 16 learner is in receipt of free school meals, they can apply for subsidised travel if they are attending their nearest suitable school.

Concessionary Travel

Those learners that are not eligible for free transport are able to apply for concessionary travel.

Concessionary seats will be awarded if a vacant seat exists, there is no financial implication to the Council, no disruption to the transport route and the learner is taken to a specified pick up and drop off point as determined by the transport provider. Concessionary seats are not guaranteed to be awarded from the start of the academic year; however, all learners will be notified if a seat is available within 10 working days of the commencement of the academic year. If an application is made during the academic year, the applicant will be notified if a seat is available within 10 working days. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the child/children are transported to and from school whilst their application is being considered

The pickup and drop off point may be more than a mile from the learner's home but no further than 1.5 miles for primary aged learners and 2 miles for secondary.

Learners will not be authorised to use a concessionary placement until officially confirmed in writing by the Commissioning Team.

Applications for Post 16 learners will take priority for concessionary seats. If vacant seats remain, concessionary seats will be awarded based on when the application form was received. For one or more applications received on the same date, the learner whose home address measures the furthest walking distance to the educational establishment will take precedence.

On occasions it may be necessary to withdraw a concessionary seat, if the seat is withdrawn then we will provide 10 working days' notice and parents will be required to make alternative arrangements.

Pupils allocated a concessionary seat midway through a term will be charged per week for the number of weeks remaining in that term. Payment may be paid in monthly instalments via a standing order by contacting the Sundry Debtor Team upon receiving an invoice.

Applications for concessionary transport will not be considered for learners who are in arrears for previous concessionary transport. When the arrears are cleared the learner will then become eligible for concessionary travel if a seat is available.

Refunds will be payable from the date that the Commissioning Team receive written confirmation from the parent that they wish to cancel their child's seat. Retrospective refunds will not be made.

Mode of Transport

Where a learner has been awarded free transport, travel will be in the form of a season ticket for public transport or on dedicated home to school transport.

The Council will always in the first instance seek to provide transport via season tickets on public transport and dedicated transport will only be provided if public transport is not available.

Parents are not able to choose which form of transport or specify vehicles their child will travel on. If a learner does travel on dedicated home to school transport, there is no guarantee that the driver or passenger assistant will stay throughout the learners' academic journey.

There is no guarantee that a learner with special educational needs will automatically receive a passenger assistant in the vehicle provided or be a sole passenger. The provision of passenger assistants is determined by the evidence provided by the learner's consultant or SEN statement.

Bus Passes

All learners travelling on dedicated transport will require a QR code to travel. This can be downloaded from the Councils Elitech software and parents will be provided with guidance how to do this when they are advised that their application for transport has been successful.

The QR code will need to be scanned by the learner when they embark and disembark a vehicle. A hard copy or digital QR code can be used. If a learner loses their QR code during the day, all drivers have a list of passengers so the learner will still be able to travel if they are on the passenger list. No learner will be able to travel without a QR code or inclusion on the passenger list.

Those learners who have been granted free travel on public transport will be issued a season ticket by the operator prior to the commencement of the academic year.

Additional Journeys

Transport is only provided to and from the learner's home and school. Transport will not be provided to breakfast or after school clubs or for any journeys required during the school day.

Where a learner is taking part in an induction process or has a reduced school schedule, transport will not be provided, and parents will need to make their own arrangements. Transport will not be provided where a learner needs to leave school prior to the end of the school day for sickness or to attend medical appointments.

If a family must reside in a temporary address, transport will not normally be provided. If there are however exceptional circumstances, e.g. the learner is in years 10 and 11 discretionary transport may be provided.

Right to Withdraw Transport

Where it becomes evident that free transport has been provided in error, the Council has the right to withdraw the transport with 21 days' notice.

Where circumstances change with the walking route measurement or assessment during an academic year, the free transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic term.

Where concessionary transport has been awarded and the seat is subsequently no longer available e.g. it is required for a pupil eligible for free transport or the contract is terminated, the pass will be withdrawn with 10 days' notice.

Behavioural Issues

The safety of all learners travelling on home to school transport is paramount. If a learner misbehaves, the Council reserves the right to withdraw the transport provision. Whenever the Commissioning Team is made aware of an

incident on home to school transport they will liaise with schools and the Education Directorate to investigate the incident. Where necessary warning letters and or email correspondence will be sent to the parents of learners who misbehave, cause damage to a vehicle, threaten or cause injury to passengers or drivers / passenger assistants or behave in such a way that might jeopardise safety. Home to school transport may be withdrawn from the learner on a temporary or permanent basis in accordance with the Learner Travel Operational Guidance. The Council also reserves the right to either suspend or cancel transport for learners where drivers or passenger assistants have received verbal abuse or been physically assaulted by parents or guardians. In such cases the victims will be encouraged to report such actions to the police and any other necessary authorities.

Where transport is withdrawn, parents are responsible for ensuring that their child gets to school.

Personal Transport Budgets

The Council may choose to offer parents a personal transport budget (PTB), where it is the most cost-effective solution for the Council to meet its statutory duties. It will not automatically be provided and will not be granted where existing suitable transport is in operation.

The PTB is a payment designed to reimburse parents for the costs incurred in providing transport for their children. The payments are made directly into the parent's bank account monthly. The PTB will be calculated based on the driving distance between home and school (by using a Digital Information Mapping System), from the point your property meets the adopted highway to the nearest available entrance to the school. In addition, a calculation will be undertaken to determine the usual time it takes to travel from your home to the school and back again.

Payments to parents will be calculated on a daily rate which includes the travel time and mileage for two journeys to the school and back. Reimbursement rates will be confirmed prior to the commencement of the transport arrangement

Payments will be made to parents as follows:

September: Full Monthly Payment based on the completion of all school days for the calendar month.

October to July – The Commissioning Team will contact the school to confirm any learner absences in the preceding month. If a learner has been absent the monthly payment will be reduced to reflect the days where travel has not been incurred.

There will not be any additional allowance for delays due to traffic conditions.

The ALN team may determine that a petrol allowance will be the most appropriate reimbursement method and will advise parents / carers prior to the commencement of transport.

Unforeseen Circumstances

If a transport operator is unable to provide transport due to an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, the Commissioning Team will try to secure alternative transport provision. If, however alternative transport cannot be provided, parents will be contacted and asked to take their children to school. If parents agree they will be reimbursed for the mileage incurred at the rate of 65p a mile following the submission of a completed claims form.

Complaints Process

Only complaints received in writing from parents or learners will be investigated by the Council. Complaints should be made to:

passengertransportunit@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The Commissioning Unit will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and respond within 10 working days. There may be occasions where we will need to take longer than 10 working days and we will advise you when this happens and provide a timescale as to when you will receive a response.

If a complaint is upheld, appropriate steps will be taken to remedy the issue as soon as is practicable.

A response will be provided within 21 days. If the appeal is rejected, there will be no further right of appeal.

If the parent is dissatisfied with the decision process and believes that they have not been treated fairly and in accordance with the Councils Home to School Transport Policy, they can make a formal complaint by contacting feedback@monmouthshire.gov.uk or calling 01633 644644.

Appeals Process

If an application for free transport is refused a parent can appeal the decision using the following process:

Stage 1

The parent should complete an appeal form which can be obtained from the Commissioning Team by emailing:

passengertransportunit@monmouthshire.gov.uk

or calling

01633 644777

The appeal form should be returned to the Commissioning Team with supporting evidence. Their appeal will be considered by the Commissioning Manager and they will receive a formal response within 21 working days.

Stage 2

If the parent is not satisfied with the appeal decision, they can refer the matter to the Head of Decarbonisation, Transport & Support Services. The Head of Service will consider the appeal and any supporting information against the Councils Home to School Transport Policy and the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure.

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