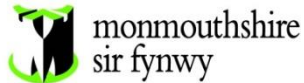


Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 29 August 2023

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk** on **Wednesday, 6th September, 2023**, at **5.00 pm**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. THE REVIEW OF THE RESPITE OPPORTUNITIES SERVICE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS 1 - 88

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To present the findings of the Respite Opportunities Service review and seek approval of the review recommendations.

Author: Ceri York Service Manager Commissioning and Disability Services Manager

Contact Details: ceeriyork@monmouthshire.gov.uk

4. CROSS BORDER MARCHES PARTNERSHIP 89 - 110

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To establish a collaborative "Cross Border Marches Partnership" with neighbouring local authorities, Herefordshire Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Councils.

The Partnership will provide a flexible umbrella framework for joint working which supports local service delivery, based around how people and places function, rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries. It also enables the Council to harness the unique value of Monmouthshire's cross border location.

Author: Frances O'Brien – Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Cath Fallon – Head of Enterprise and Community Animation

Contact Details: FrancesOBrien@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk

5. PROPOSED HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY 2024/25 111 - 152

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the legal responsibilities for the provision of school transport. The legislation places duty on local authorities to review their transport policy on an annual basis. The Transport Policy needs to be confirmed by the 1st October for application in the following academic year.

The draft policy has been the subject of public consultation and scrutiny Consideration and has been amended to reflect the feedback received. The purpose of this report is to consider the proposed Transport Policy for 24-25 and determine whether to consider its adoption.

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

Contact Details: debrahill-howells@monmothshire.gov.uk

6. OUTCOME OF STATUTORY OBJECTION PERIOD TO ESTABLISH A 3-11 SEEDLING WELSH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MONMOUTH 153 - 186

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with the outcome of the statutory objection period regarding the Authority's intention to establish a 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site.

This report presents the objection report to Cabinet and seeks their approval to proceed with the proposal.

Author: Will McLean Chief Officer, Children and Young People

Contact Details: willmclean@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Leader Lead Officer – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation Promoting localism within regional and national frameworks Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships with City Regions and Public Service Board Strategic Procurement Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien</p> <p>Economic Strategy Local development plan and strategic development plan including strategic housing sites Homelessness, affordable housing delivery and private sector housing (empty homes, leasing scheme, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive tech) Supporting Town Centres including car parking and enforcement Development Management and Building Control Skills and Employment Broadband connectivity Car parks and civil enforcement trading standards, environmental health, public protection, and licencing</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Rachel Garrick	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Frances O’Brien, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Benefits Digital and information technology Human resources, payroll, health and safety Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Emergency planning</p>	Caldicot Castle

<p>Martyn Groucutt</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education School standards and improvement Community learning Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport</p>	<p>Lansdown</p>
<p>Ian Chandler</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children’s services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health and wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision</p>	<p>Llantilio Crossenny</p>
<p>Catrin Maby</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Decarbonisation Transport planning, public transport, highways and MCC fleet Active travel and Rights of way Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces, and parks Pavements and back lanes Flood alleviation, management and recovery Countryside, biodiversity, and river health</p>	<p>Drybridge</p>
<p>Angela Sandles</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement Lead Officers – Frances O’Brien,, Matthew Gatehouse, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Community inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre, and customer service and registrars Leisure centres, play and sport Tourism Development and Cultural strategy Public conveniences</p>	<p>Magor East with Undy</p>

	Electoral Services and constitution review Communications, public relations and marketing Ethics and standards Welsh Language	
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Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

- Giving people the best possible start in life
- A thriving and connected county
- Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment
- Lifelong well-being
- A future focused council

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

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SUBJECT: THE REVIEW OF THE RESPITE OPPORTUNITIES SERVICE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS
MEETING: CABINET
DATE: 6th SEPTEMBER 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To present the findings of the Respite Opportunities Service review and seek approval of the review recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Cabinet considers the findings of the Respite Opportunities Service review and approves all the review recommendations as set out in The Review of the Respite Opportunities Service report (Appendix 1).

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.

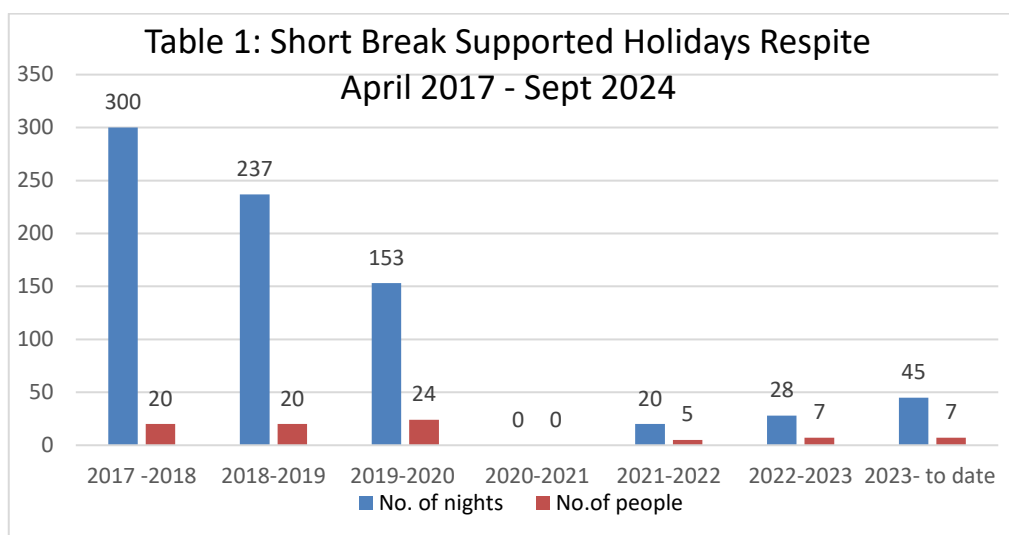
4.3 The ethos of the service will remain as before - a high quality flexible respite service that offers choice, meets people's respite needs and supports individual outcomes. People will continue to have access to the full range of respite support options. Residential respite will be offered through 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:



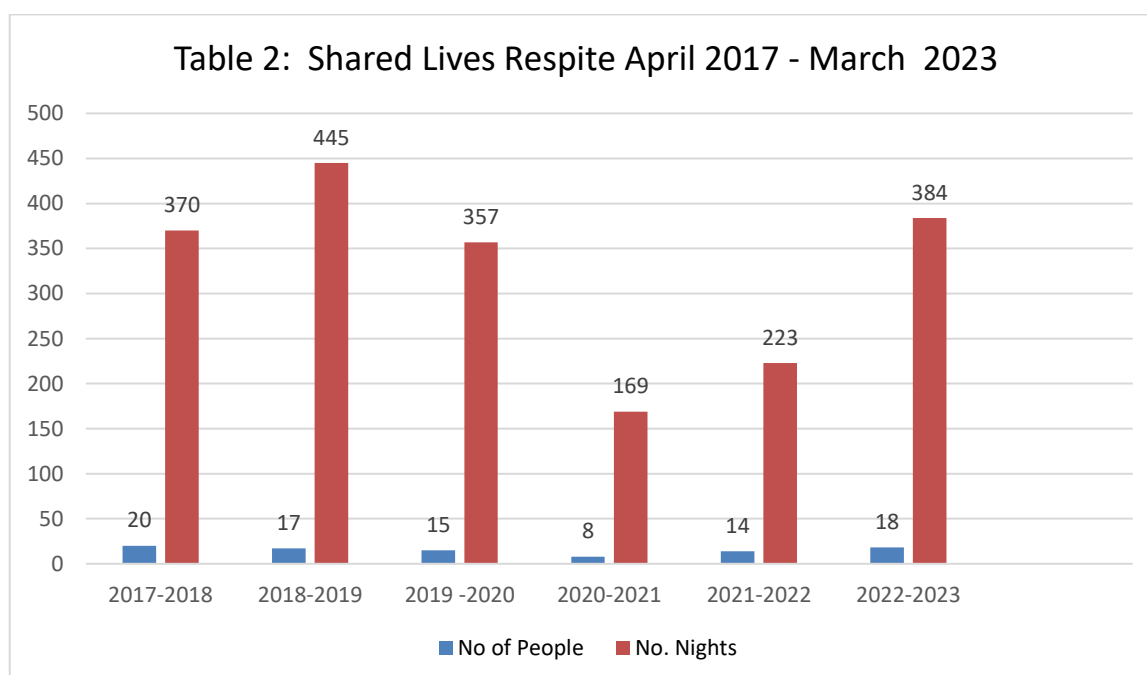
5.2.2 A variety of supported holiday providers had been sourced and we are able to offer a selection of short break holidays, typically around 4 days.

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.

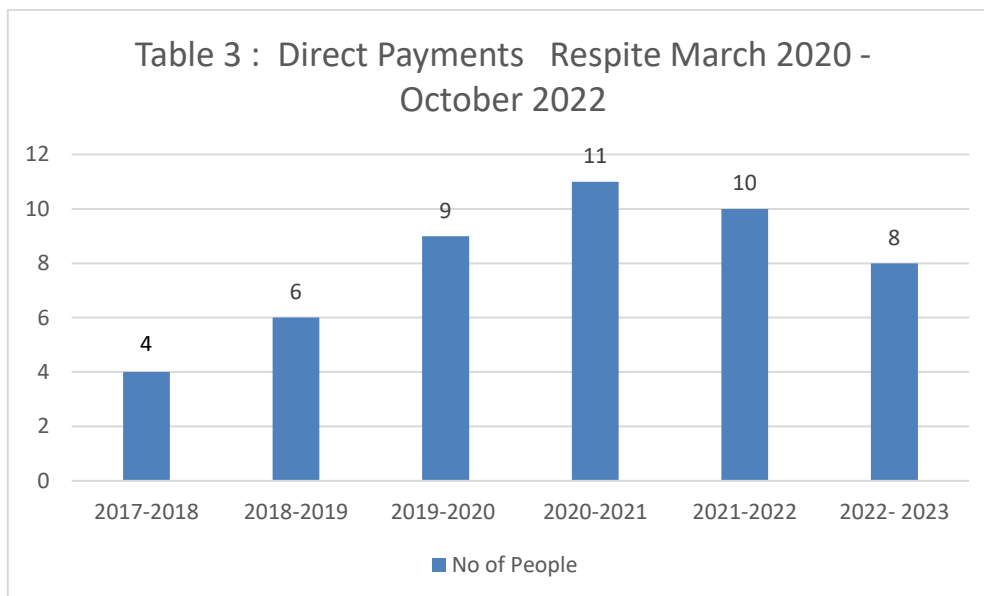


5.3.3 The Shared Lives service is operated via the Gwent wide South East Wales scheme. People receiving report are matched with host carers from anywhere in the areas and are not restricted to their local authority footprint.

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:

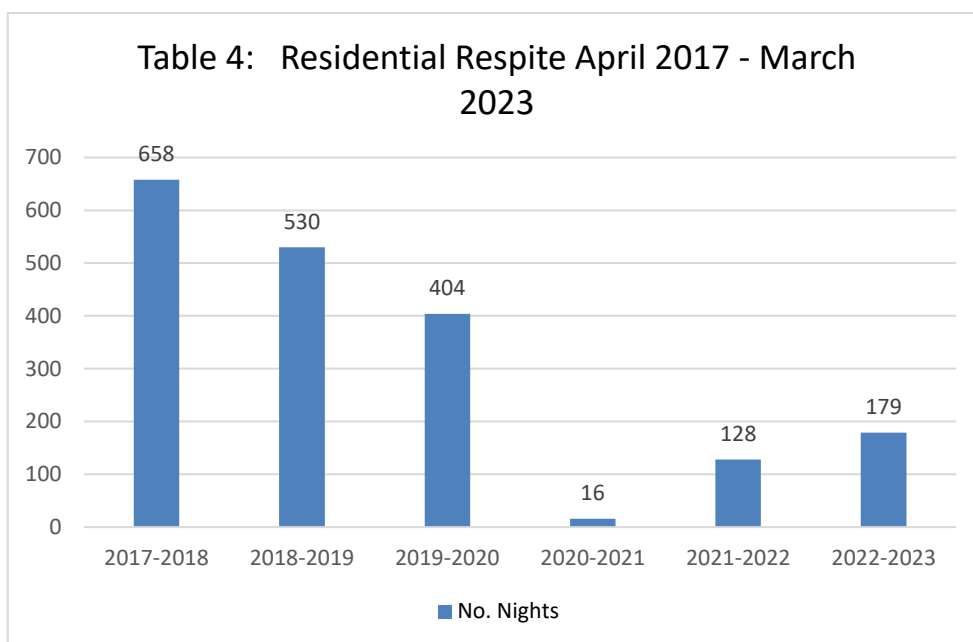
- 2 are receiving residential respite and are satisfied with their current support.
- 2 are receiving residential respite but would prefer to use Budden Crescent if available.
- 4 are not currently receiving residential respite and have confirmed Budden Crescent is the only option they will consider.

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.

People Scrutiny Committee

6.13 The findings of the Respite Opportunities Service review, review recommendations, and the feedback received from people using the service were presented to People Scrutiny Committee for consideration on 10th August 2023.

6.14 A presentation was made to the Committee which is attached as Appendix 5.

6.15 The People Scrutiny Committee has provided formal feedback to Cabinet on the proposals which is attached as Appendix 6 and has made two recommendations. These recommendations are detailed below, and a response is provided to each:

Recommendation 1: That if the Executive does close Budden Crescent, it fully reviews the respite options, given that majority of the options are currently unviable for those with complex needs who need 24/7 care. The Committee requests the Executive ensures that alternative types of respite support and 'shared lives' is accessible to people and provides the appropriate level of care and support for everyone receiving respite.

Response: All the respite options currently provided and those proposed, are able to provide 24/7 care for people with complex needs. Residential providers are fully wheelchair accessible. We know that some options currently have less choice and availability for people who use wheelchairs, which is something that we are seeking to address. All the alternative types of respite support including shared lives will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are accessible to people and provide the appropriate level of care and support for everyone receiving respite.

Recommendation 2: That the Executive ensures that social services fully engage intensively with the families who are unhappy with the recommendation to close Budden

Crescent to provide more intensive care and support them and to see how their needs can be met.

Response: We are committed to continuing to fully engage with the families who are unhappy with the recommendation to close Budden Crescent on an individual basis to offer appropriate care and support which can meet their needs.

6.16 The People Scrutiny Committee offers key points for consideration by the Executive. These key points are set out in in the table below, with a response provided to each.

Key Point	Response
Some members commented that the report didn't outline the full range of respite opportunities available across the county.	The report outlines the full range of respite options for people with learning disabilities. It does not include other respite opportunities for other groups of people such as, older people or people with physical disabilities as these services are separate to the Respite Opportunities Services and were therefore not included in the review.
There were some concerns expressed about the data and whether we have a true picture of the demand for the service, both currently and in the future.	Data in respect of the current demand for the service is obtained from the case work of the Community Learning Disability team. The team supports people with a learning disability in Monmouthshire who are eligible for and want social services support. This information has been used to determine the current demand for respite support. Future demand projections have been developed using information relating to young people coming through translation who may require respite support once they are 18.
Some members commented that lower levels of use as a resulting from the pandemic should not be a justification to remove services.	Prior to the onset of the pandemic, demand for residential respite has been decreasing as more people have been accessing other forms of respite such as shared lives, supported holidays etc. In 2019 the number of people who received respite at Budden Crescent had reduced to 13. Due to reasons such as people moving out of the county or moving into supported living settings this has reduced again. There are currently 8 people who have been assessed as requiring for residential respite.
Some members acknowledged that whilst supporting people is very important, if demand for the services offered at Budden Crescent has declined, the cost implications cannot be ignored, acknowledging that it leaves less funding available to provide other types of respite.	The reduction in demand for residential respite means that a service the scale of Budden Crescent is no longer needed. Maintaining the service as it is has considerable cost implications. Under the proposals people will still continue to receive the range of respite support options including residential respite in facilities within the region. It will result in significant cost savings which can be invested in the other forms of respite support set out within the report.
Some members felt that relying on facilities provided by other local authorities may be short sighted, given the increasing ageing population and advocated the need for some in-county respite provision.	Other regional local authorities have also seen a steady decline in the demand for residential respite for people with learning disabilities. This has resulted in the need for greater collaboration between authorities with purchasing of additional capacity. The Gwent Population Needs

	<p>assessment predicts an increase in the number of people with a learning disability over the age of 65, of approx. 54.5%, by 2035. If this increase is applied to the current number of 8 people it would equate to an additional 4 people requiring residential respite.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised over the ability of the alternative respite provision, to respond to emergencies and how flexible the proposed alternative arrangements would be to meet those needs?</p>	<p>Existing options such as Shared Lives and residential respite within neighbouring counties all currently offer emergency respite and these are used when needed. The proposals include strengthening the emergency respite provision including the development of respite at home.</p>
<p>Members questioned whether Budden Crescent could operate a wider respite model to cater for people suffering with dementia or learning disabilities and whether this would make the service financially viable. Members heard that this would be very difficult to staff, as different care skills would be needed for people with different health conditions. However, Members are aware that Centrica Lodge in Newport operates a wider respite model, catering for elderly Care, learning disabilities, mental health conditions and younger adults. Members question therefore, why Monmouthshire cannot diversify to meet a number of care needs and suggest this is something the Executive should explore. The possibility of a regional facility was also highlighted, recognising that other authorities are facing similar challenges.</p>	<p>This would be difficult to achieve if the intention was for it to remain as a respite provision for people with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Generally speaking, the degree to which there can be 'mixed' categories of care within the same residential establishment is limited by the requirements of registration under RISCA. Whilst this does limit the opportunity to offer a respite provision that is wide ranging it does ensure that the environment and the facilities are appropriate and the staff are trained to meet the specific needs of the people who access the service.</p> <p>In the case of both Budden Crescent (and Centrica Lodge), the workforce requires carers who specialise in learning disability albeit that this incorporates a range of skills aimed at supporting people with learning disabilities who have complex needs and / or who may be older and / or have physical disabilities or mental health issues.</p> <p>The statement of purpose for Centrica states, "Centrica Lodge is residential respite for adults who have learning disabilities and mental health, including individuals with high support needs such as multiple disabilities and behaviours that may challenge, from the age of 18 years."</p> <p>This allows the service at Centrica to provide a respite service for adults over the age of 18 with learning disabilities some of whom will be people with complex needs including physical disabilities and mental health issues. The service is able to accommodate people with Learning Disabilities who are older; have physical disability and mental health issues – but whose prime need falls under learning disability.</p> <p>The CIW inspection report from 2019 states, " Centrica Lodge is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide personal care and accommodation for six people over the age of 18 years with a learning disability and /or physical disabilities."</p>

<p>There were mixed feelings about the review, some members advocating the need for an independent review, but others commented that it was a robust report.</p>	<p>A comprehensive review of the Respite Opportunities Service has been undertaken- through looking at overall patterns of use . The review has sought the views of all people receiving respite service throughout the process and these views have been taken into account within the final recommendations.</p>
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7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. The review draws conclusions for each existing respite options and makes 8 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. REASONS:

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

10.3 Implementation of the recommendations will result in a service which is fit for the future, delivers high quality support, and is cost effective.

10.4 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.

10.5 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.

11. 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	-	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.
		£3500		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

11.1 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.

11.2 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).

11.3 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.

12. CONSULTEES:

Jane Rodgers - Chief Officer, Social Care & Health

Jenny Jenkins – Head of Adult Services
People Scrutiny Committee

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Appendix 1 Respite Opportunities Review Report
- Appendix 2 Summary of Second Stage Engagement process with people and families. Consultation
- Appendix 3 Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix 4 Options Appraisal
- Appendix 5 Presentation to People Scrutiny Committee
- Appendix 6 Formal Feedback from People Scrutiny Committee

AUTHOR:

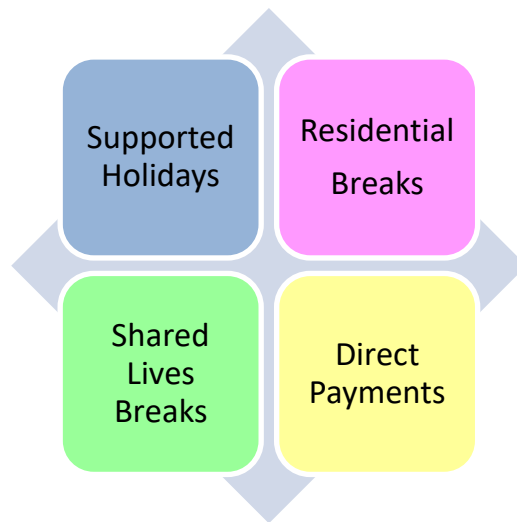
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THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESPITE OPPORTUNITIES SERVICE FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN MONMOUTHSHIRE



**Review Report
Updated June 2023**

Contents

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2. Strategic drivers and influences for people with a learning disability
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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

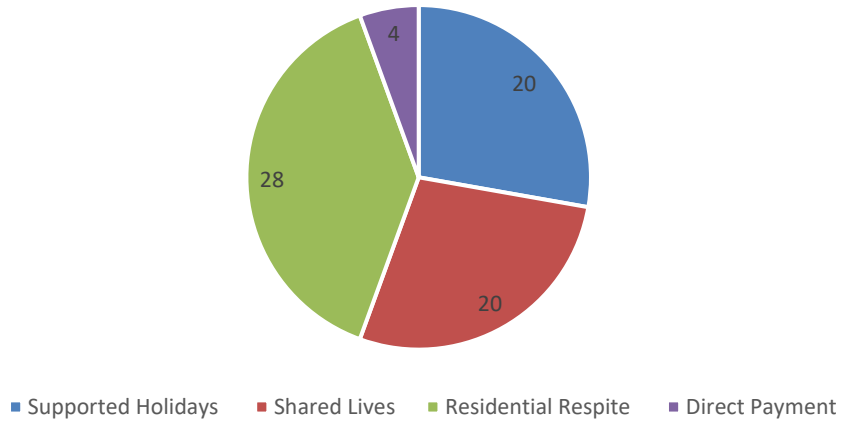


Table 2. No. of People Using Respite Options
2018/19

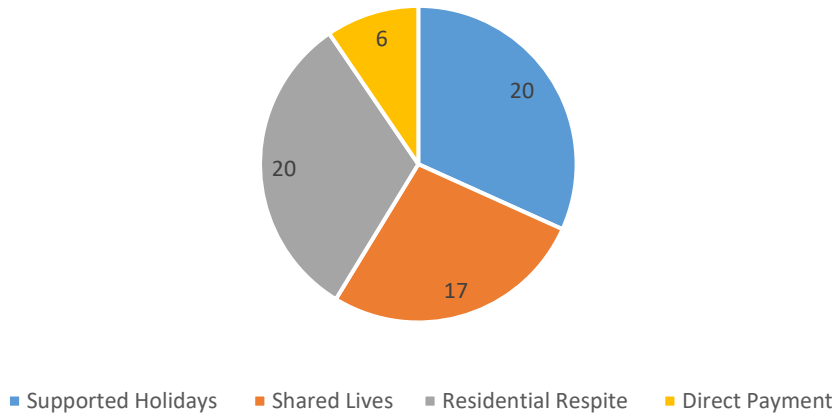
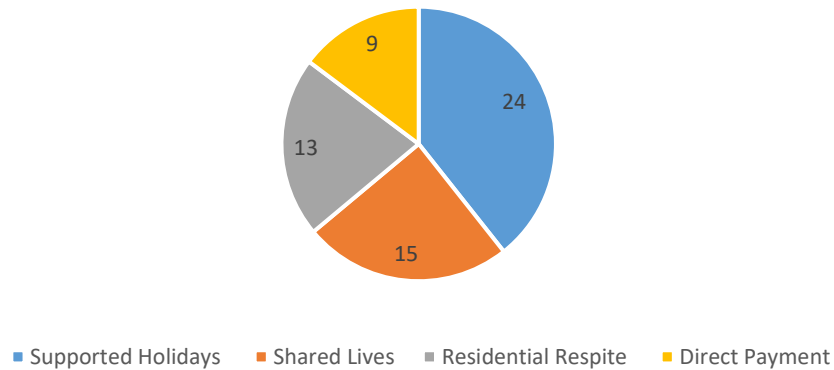
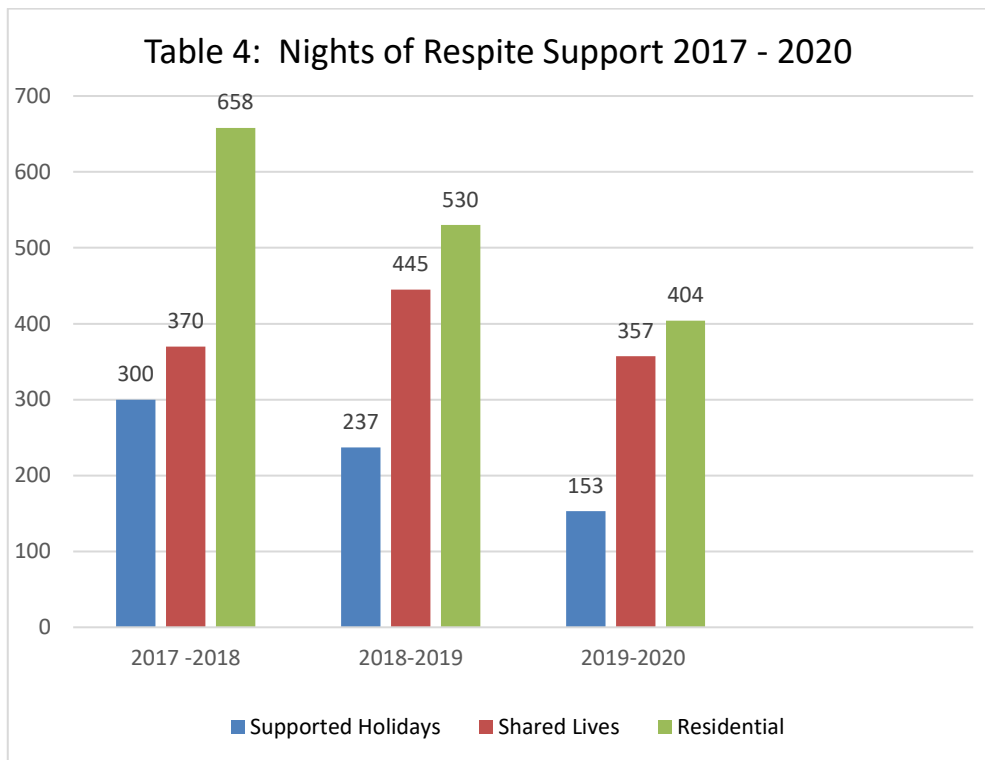


Table 3 No. of People Using Respite Options
2019/20



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



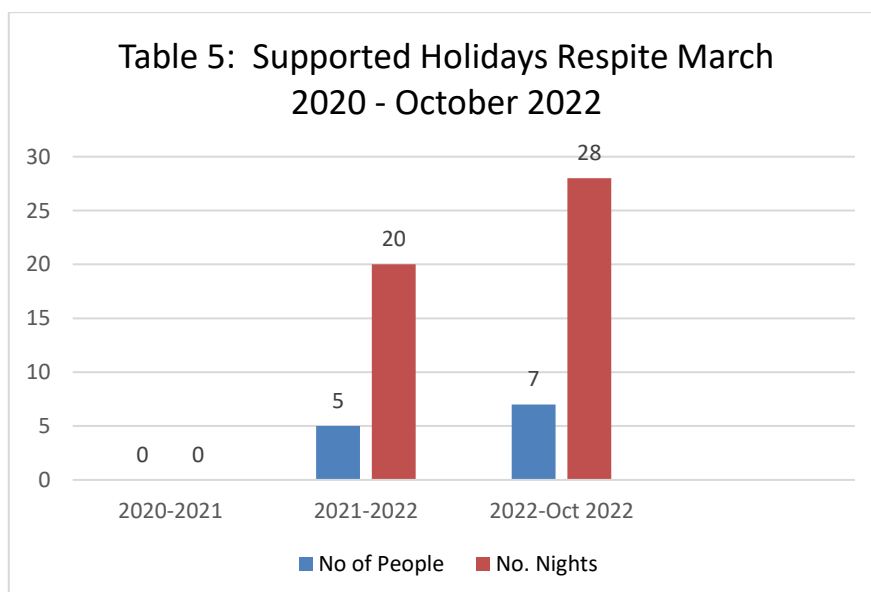
*** Please note data not available for Direct Payment nights

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.

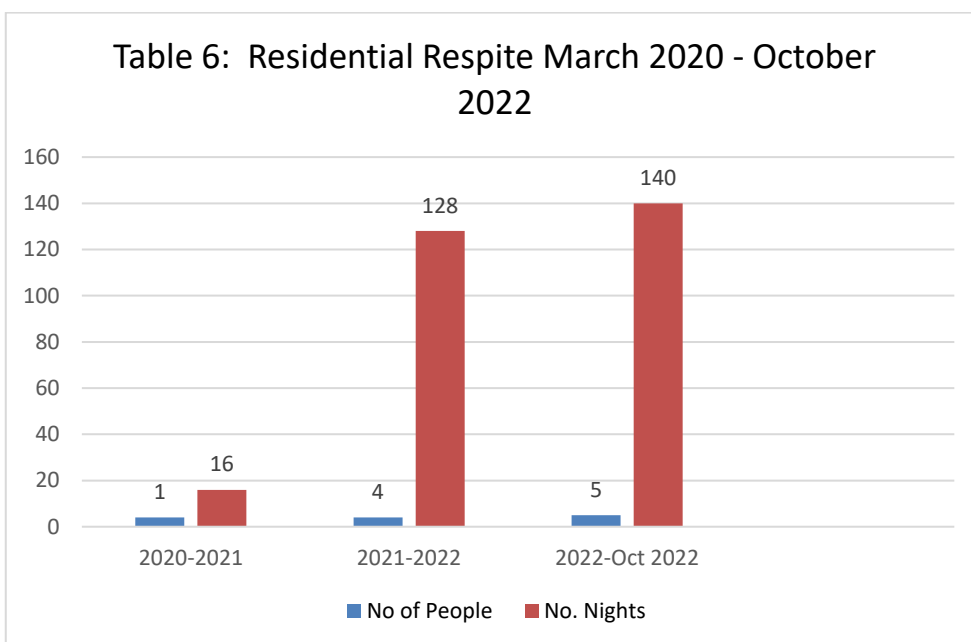
In reality, the story of the pandemic built upon the evolving narrative of demand for respite over previous years: with a reduced demand for all respite options.

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.

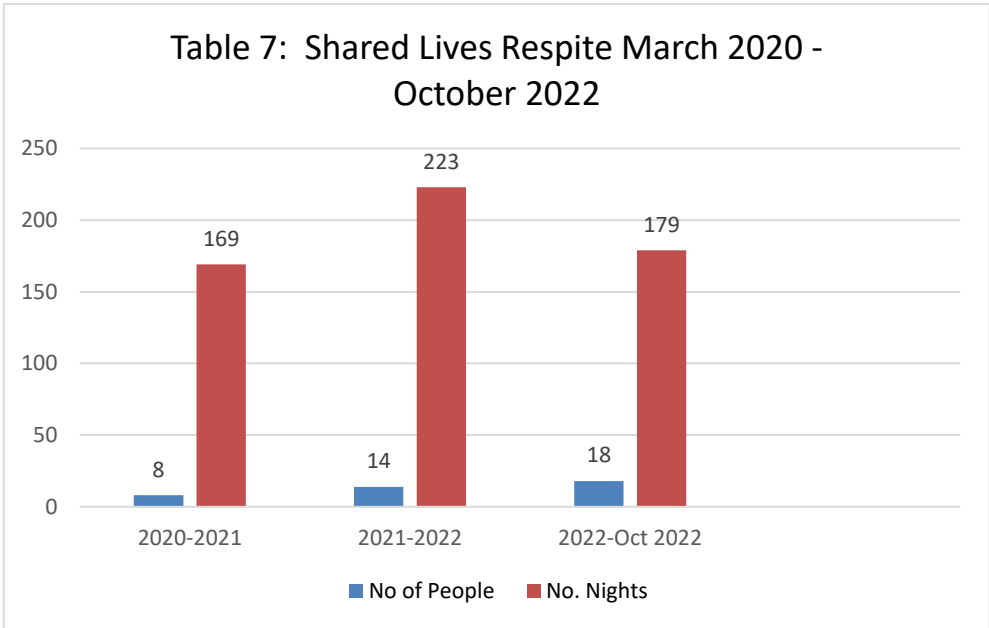
From the beginning of September 2021 to June 2022, the Budden Crescent building was used temporarily for an emergency Children’s Services placement. Since June 2022 the service has remained temporarily closed while the review of respite support is undertaken and the future need for support confirmed.



Shared Lives

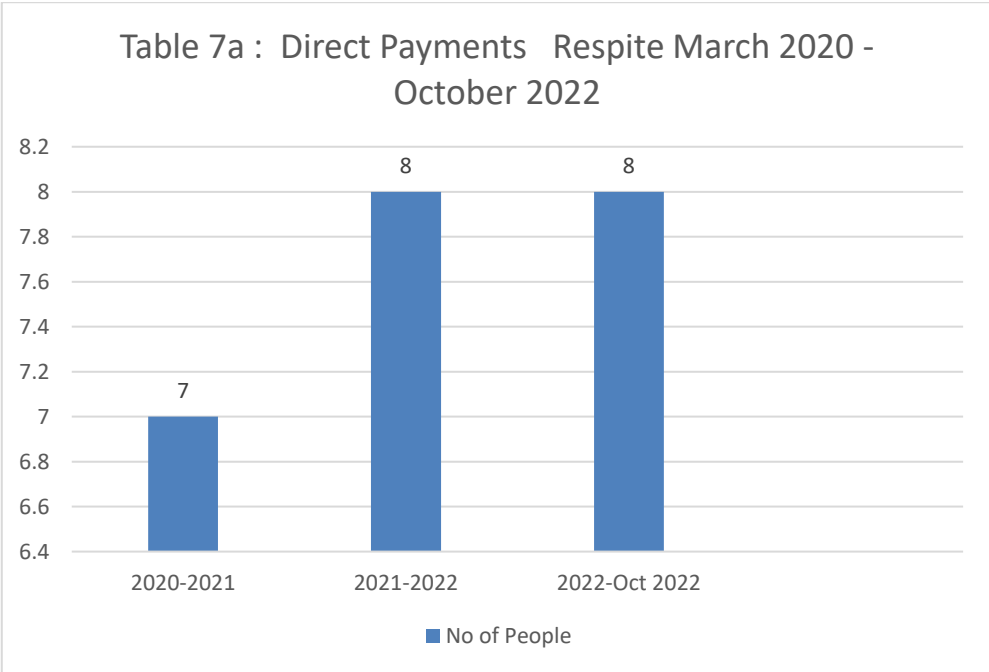
People accessing Shared Lives during 2020/21 was reduced in relation to previous years but overall, this is the one option which appears to be least impacted by the pandemic. As the setting

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

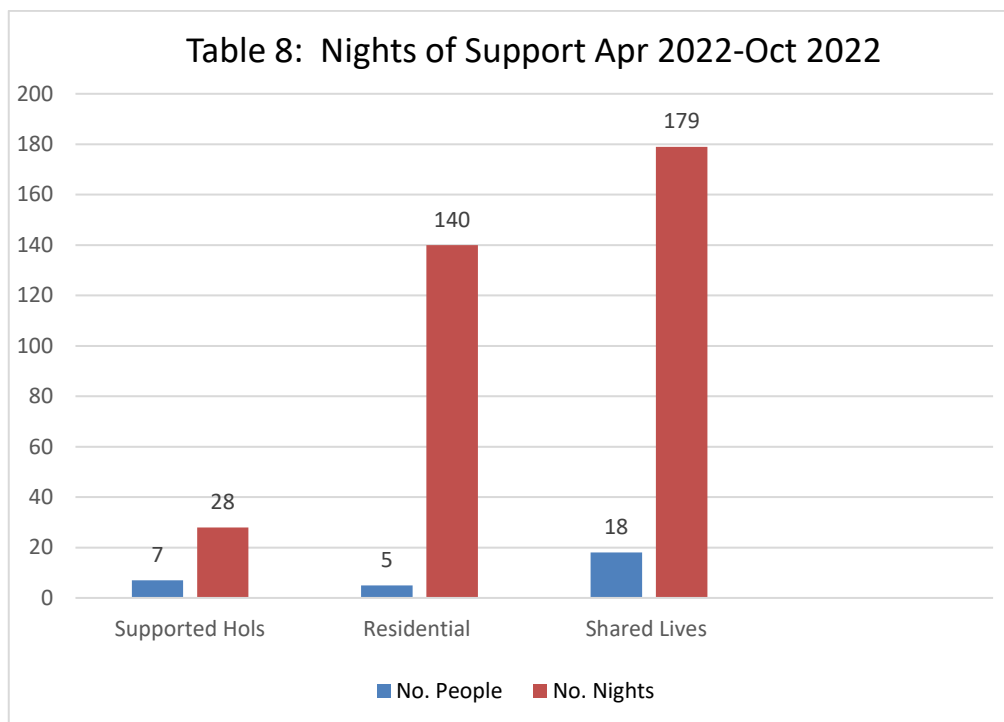
People continued to receive Direct Payments throughout this period and were able to determine how best to meet their needs within the constraints of the prevailing restrictions. There appears to be an increase in the number of people using this option although improvements in data collection may account 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.

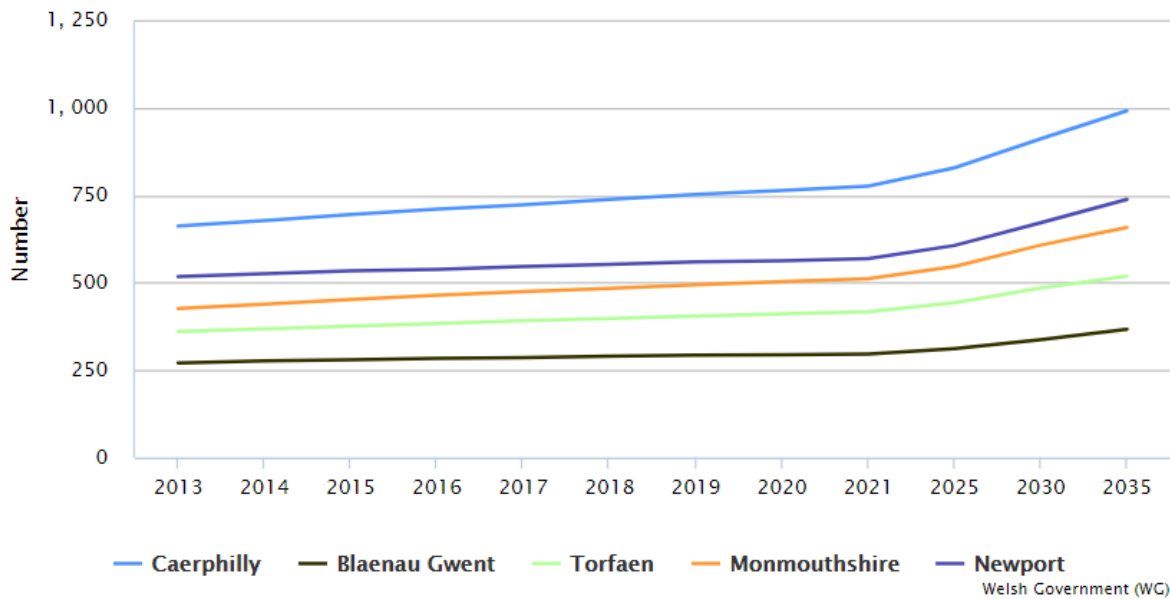
The number of people needing residential respite decreased earlier this year when 2 people moved from their family homes into a supported living setting and no longer require respite support. These 2 people previously received a high level of the respite support shown in tables 6 and 8 above: 102 nights 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 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

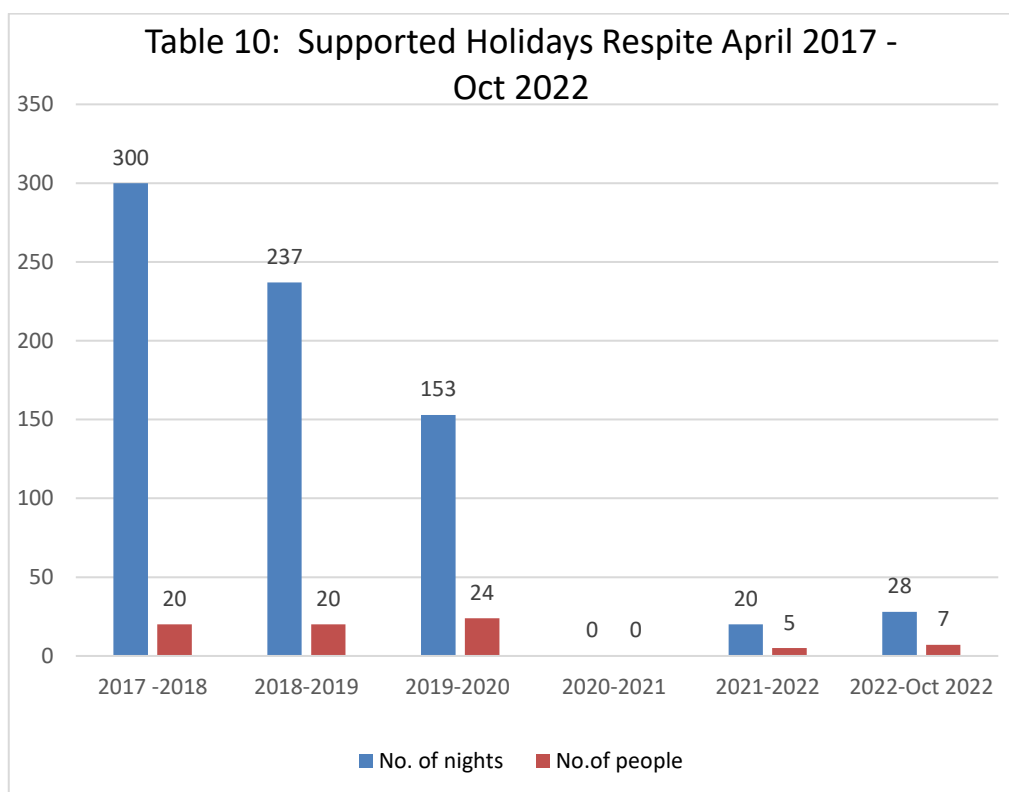
The Respite Opportunities Service has been generally successful in improving the range and availability of different types of respite support available to people with learning disabilities in Monmouthshire. Significant development has been seen in in terms of the provision of Supported Holidays and Shared 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.

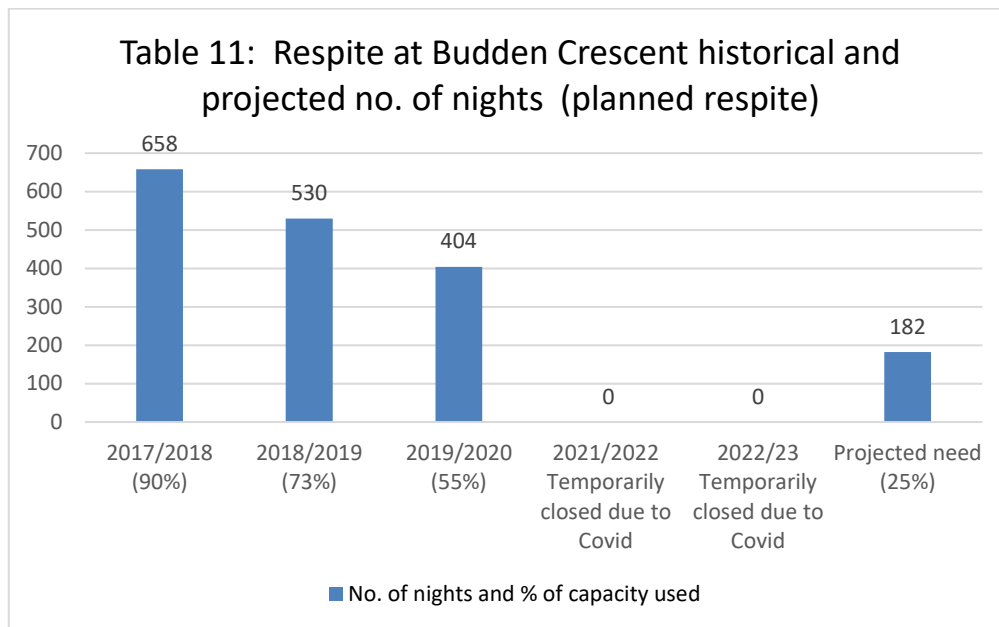
Residential Respite

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.

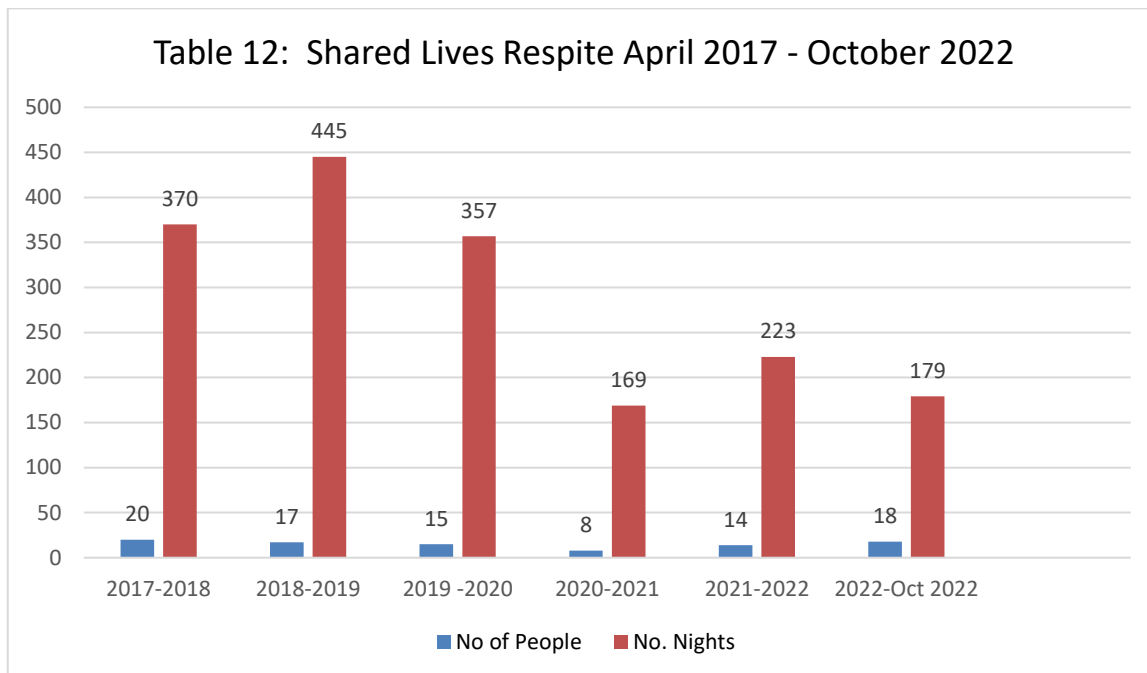
Future predictions suggest a 54.5% increase in the number of people in Monmouthshire with a learning disability by 2035. If this is applied to the existing number of people who need residential respite support, then that would equate to an increase from 8 to 12; statistically significant but does not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

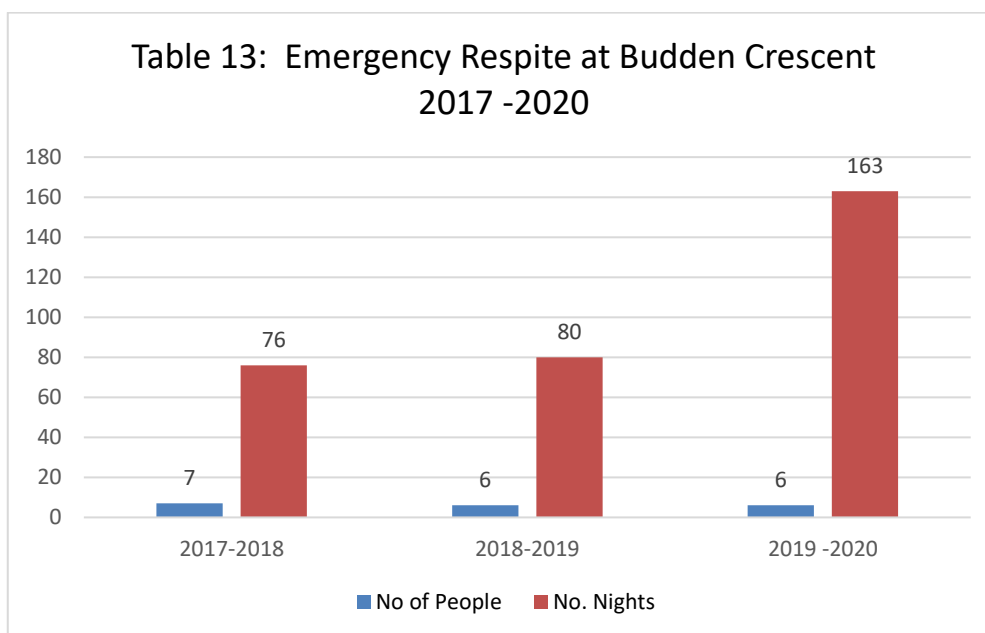
The take up of Direct Payments as means of facilitating respite support has increased with numbers averaging 8 per year. The way in which this type of support is used varies from other

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

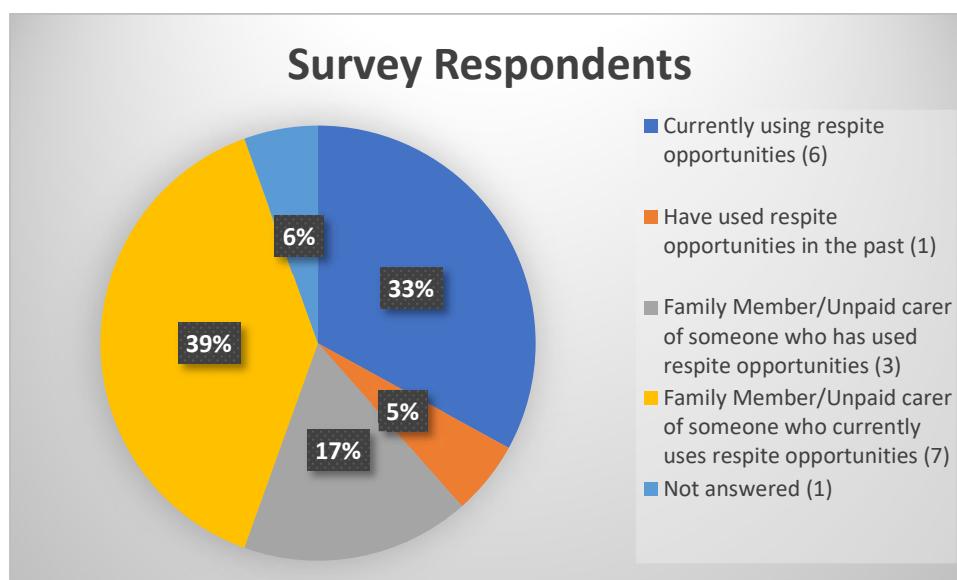
A second phase of engagement ran between the 31st March and the 7th of May 2023 on the final draft of Monmouthshire Council's respite opportunities review and the recommendations for the respite service in the future. A draft report was previously consulted on during an initial engagement phase which 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.

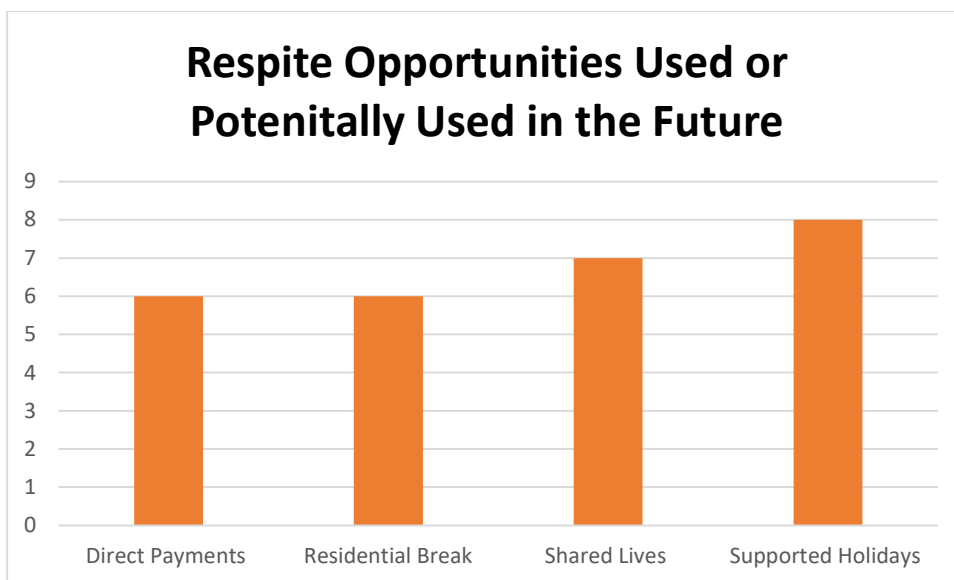
Direct contact was made with 100% of the people who currently access respite service or who are going through transition and may do so in the future, this contact included home visits, phone calls, emails, letters, and voicemails. Initial contact was made with all individuals in March by phone and letter 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:

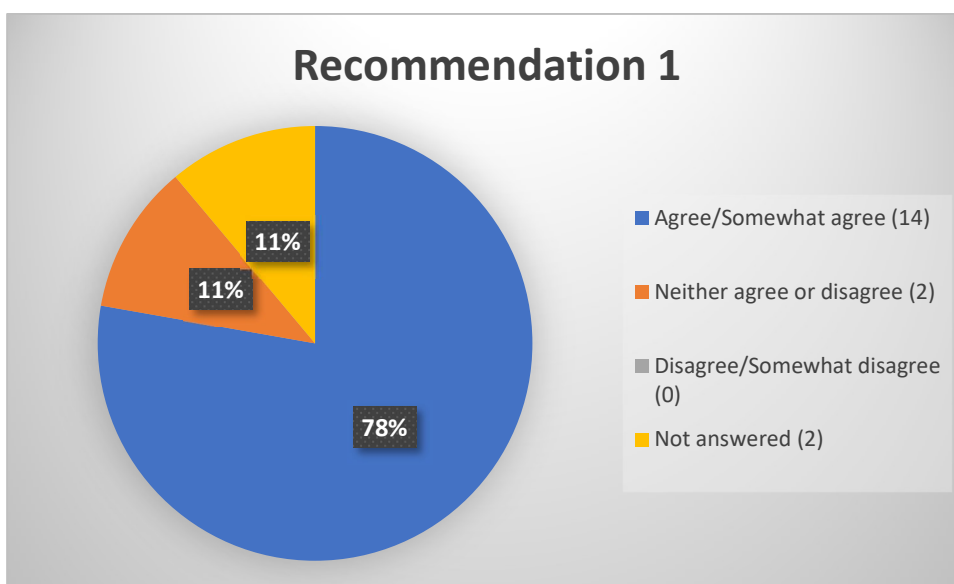


The 7 additional comments received by phone or visit were from family members so that would change the percentage breakup above to 56% of respondents being a family member or unpaid carer of someone who currently uses respite opportunities.



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.

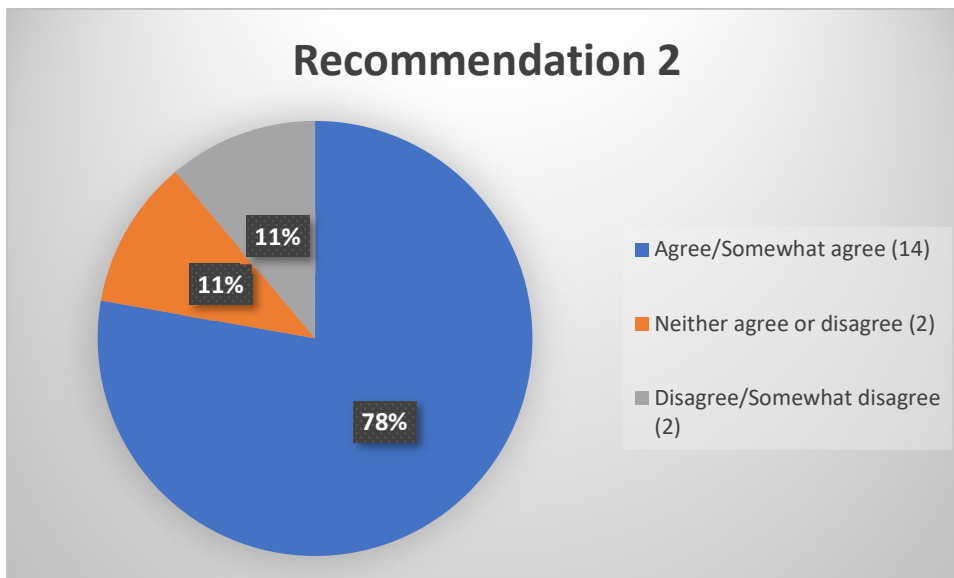
Recommendation 1: Expand the range of supported holiday opportunities to enable greater choice to match people’s interests and needs.



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.

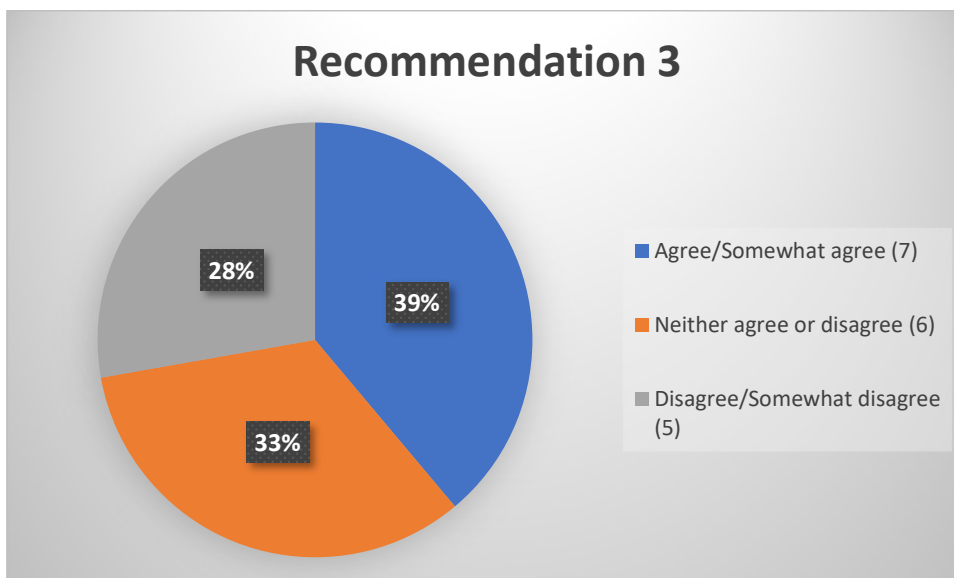
It was felt that too much choice could make holidays a complicated and time-consuming option. 16% of people weren’t familiar with the holiday option. A comment was received about considering an individual’s wider family and social circle in matching and planning holidays.

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.

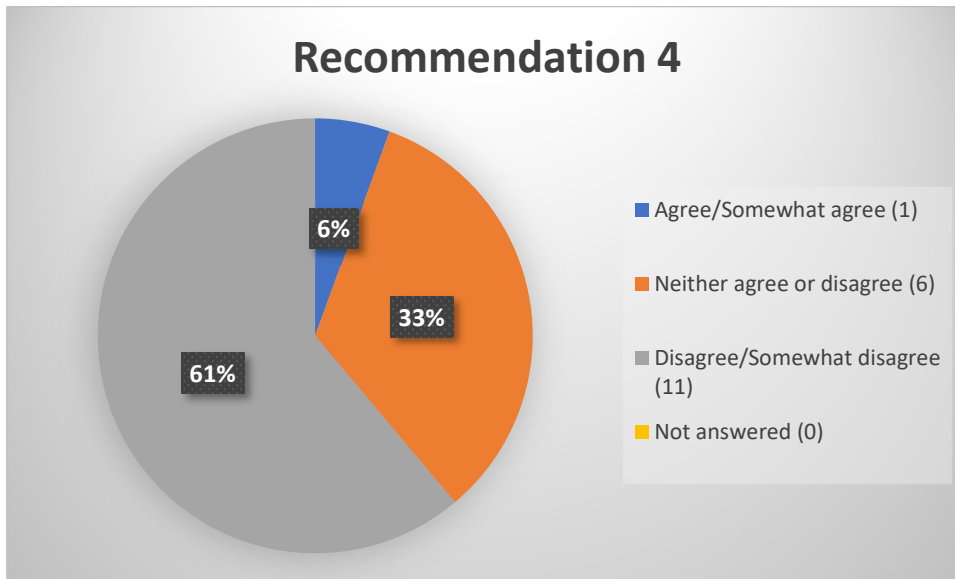
Recommendation 3: Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties.



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.

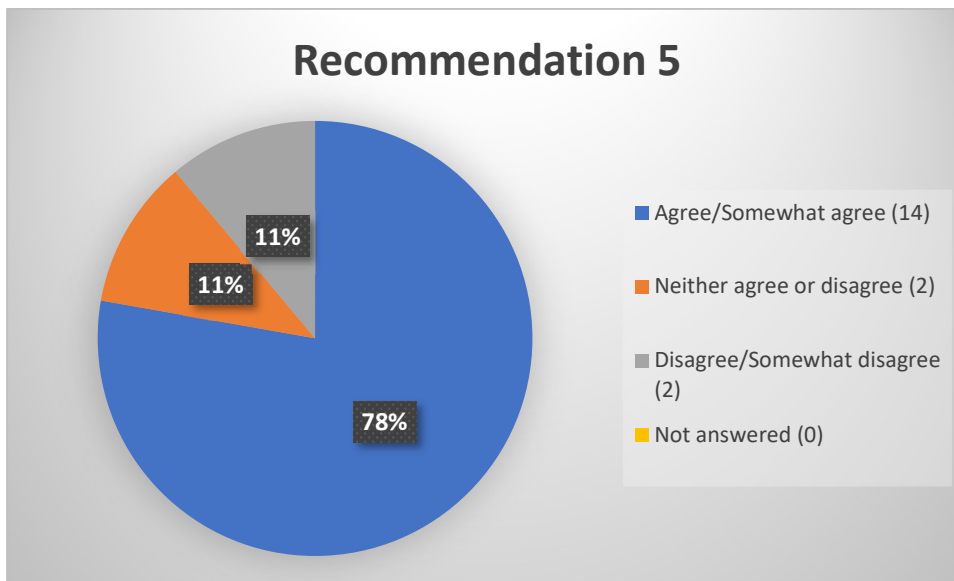
Recommendation 4: Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent.



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.

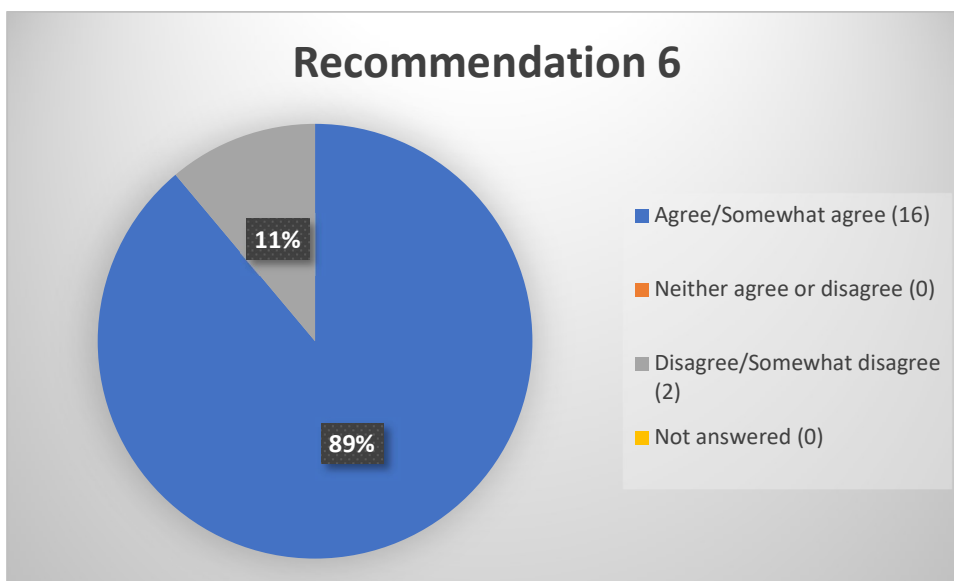
The need for a local respite offer was again mentioned. Respondents spoke favourably about the environment, its accessibility, and the competent, professional, and capable staff team. It was asked why close Budden if people are happy with this service and want to use it. 12% of respondents spoke of a 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.



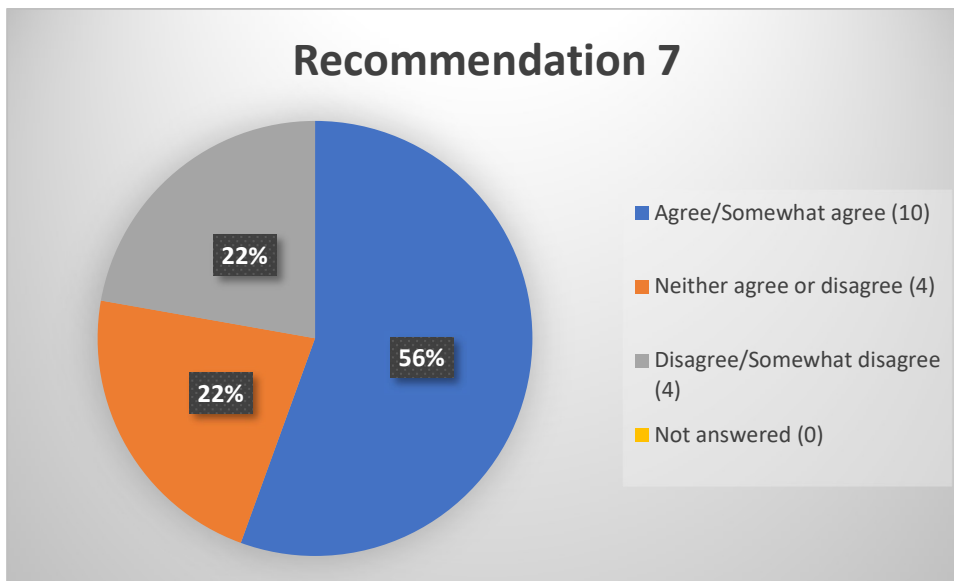
Respondent predominately agreed with this recommendation, feeling that people who want to use this service should be able to regardless of whether they are a wheelchair user or not and that everyone should have the same opportunities to access shared lives.

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



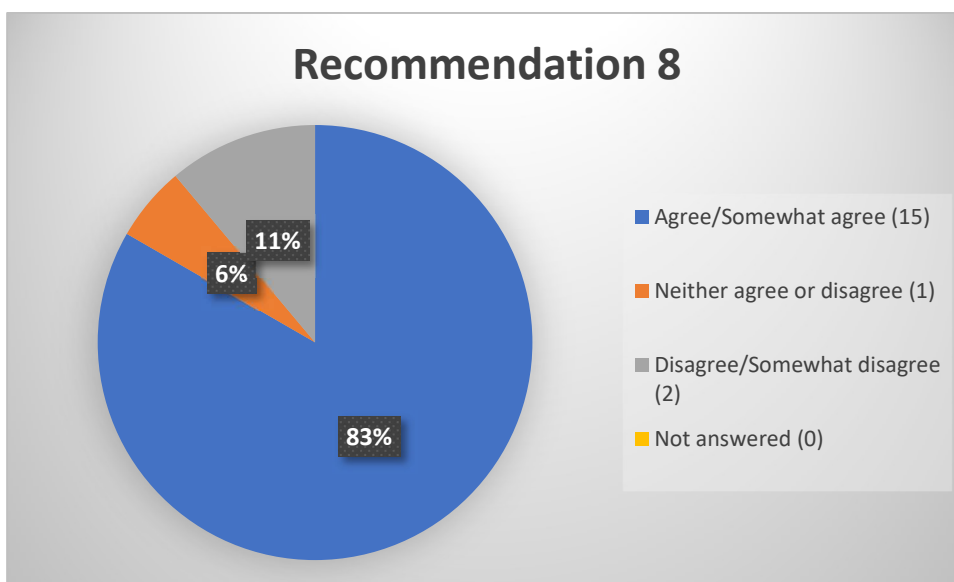
This was the most positively received recommendation and was seen as a progressive and enlightened step. The predominate theme in comments was the benefit that familiarity and comfort of surroundings would bring to the individual, the adaptations needed already being in place in a home. Individuals who 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: 16th August 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 range of support available to them, which includes emergency respite. Implementation of the proposals will positively impact those receiving respite and their family carers.</p>	<p>Some family carers are aging and therefore they may be an issue for people who have further to travel to the proposed residential respite services in Newport, Blaenau—Gwent and other counties.</p> <p>People are very familiar with the existing residential service at Budden Crescent and a change may bring anxiety/concern to aging family carers and people receiving the service.</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 of ,and people with learning disabilities may not have a residential respite service available to them that they would use.</p> <p>This could have a negative impact on the caring role of family members as they would not have a break and this could potentially be an issue if emergency residential respite was needed.</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 their needs and aspirations for the service and these have been used to determine the review's recommendations.</p> <p>On an individual basis, social workers will explore alternative options for families who may find transporting to and from the Newport or other out of county services a challenge. 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 visit 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> <p>Social workers will continue to explore options with the 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>Protected Characteristics</p>	<p>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</p>	<p>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</p>	<p>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<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>Potential negative impacts may include that it might take time for the Supported Holidays and Shared Lives provisions to develop the capability and capacity to meet the needs of all those with complex needs /wheelchair users</p>	<p>People and families 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> <p>Potential negative impacts relating to time taken to develop capability and capacity within Shared Lives and Supported Holidays will be mitigated through the provision of residential respite in settings across the region</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 at this stage	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage
Pregnancy or maternity	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage
Race	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage
Religion or Belief	The range of respite options will allow people's beliefs to be respected and supported.	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage

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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 offer suitable for colleagues.</p>
Sexual Orientation	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage

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>Carers UK states: "Working-age carers have a higher rate of poverty than those with no caring responsibilities, and women of working age who are carers have the greatest risk of all." Implementation of these proposals will ensure a range of respite services are provided which will positively impact upon people with caring roles, including women of the working age who are carers.</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>Potential negative impact upon carers who have clearly expressed they will only consider residential respite at Budden Crescent. If the proposal is agreed and carers do not use alternative available residential respite services they could be negatively affected in terms of their ability to manage their caring and working roles.</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> <p>Social workers will continue to support carers to access appropriate and available residential respite services to support them in managing their working and caring roles.</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 at this stage	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage
<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.	Not applicable at this stage
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	Material relating to the remodelled service will promote the More Than Words Active Offer.	There will be no decrease to the services that can be accessed in Welsh.	Not applicable at this stage



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>Negative: Moving to the new residential service option which offers respite in other regional respite homes will result in the existing residential respite service at Budden Crescent ending and with that the need for its highly skilled and experienced staff team.</p> <p>Implementation of the proposals will have a positive impact as it will enable the Council to deliver services which meet people's needs in a financially sustainable and cost efficient manner.</p>	<p>There may be an option for some of the Budden Crescent staff team to be offered roles in supporting respite at home or other social care roles within Disability Services. Alternative employment options will be sought with SCH and the Council as a whole.</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>None identified at this stage</p>	<p>Not applicable at this stage</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive: People will have access to range of respite services that will support their and their families' health and well-being.</p> <p>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.</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>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>None identified at this stage</p>	<p>Not applicable at this stage</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales</p>	<p>None identified at this stage</p>	<p>Not applicable at this stage</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?
Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing		
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 identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	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.	Seek and source supported holiday providers which can offer opportunities for people who are wheelchair users and or have higher support needs. 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.

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>None identified at this stage</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. Feedback from people using the service and their families has been used to inform the final proposals.</p> <p>The proposals will bring greater collaboration with regional local authority partners in terms of enhancing the Shared Lives service and the use residential respite facilities provided by other LA partners.</p>	<p>None identified at this stage</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>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</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>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. Feedback from people using the service and their families has been used to inform the final proposals.</p>	<p>None identified at this stage</p>
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>Ensuring resources are targeted where needed, providing support to families with caring responsibilities will help sustain this support and may reduce the demand for long term care which is also more costly.</p> <p>There is no anticipated reduction in service delivery because of recommendations.</p> <p>Cost efficiencies have been identified which would increase the long term sustainability of the service.</p>	<p>None identified at this stage</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>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage

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 people and prevent/detect any potential safeguarding issues which can then be dealt with.	None identified at this stage	Not applicable at this stage
Corporate Parenting	None as service is for adults only	None as service is for adults only	Not applicable at this stage

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

- 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.

Potential socio-economic impact upon carers who have clearly expressed they will only consider residential respite at Budden Crescent. If the proposal is agreed and carers do not use alternative available residential respite services they could be negatively affected in terms of their ability to manage their caring and working roles.

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
Additional action to ensure carers continue to receive support from their social workers and are offered appropriate, available respite services	From July 2023	Community Learning Disability 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	Further clarification of the detail of the negative impacts and identification of mitigation actions
3.	Cabinet pre - consultation	14 th July 2023	Further detail provided in terms of negative impacts in respect of age, disability and socio-economic duty of care.
4.	Presentation to Scrutiny Committee	10 th August 2023	Further clarity and detail provided with mitigation actions across relating to age and disability. Further detail included relating to positive and negative impacts in respect of socio-economic duty and collaboration.

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

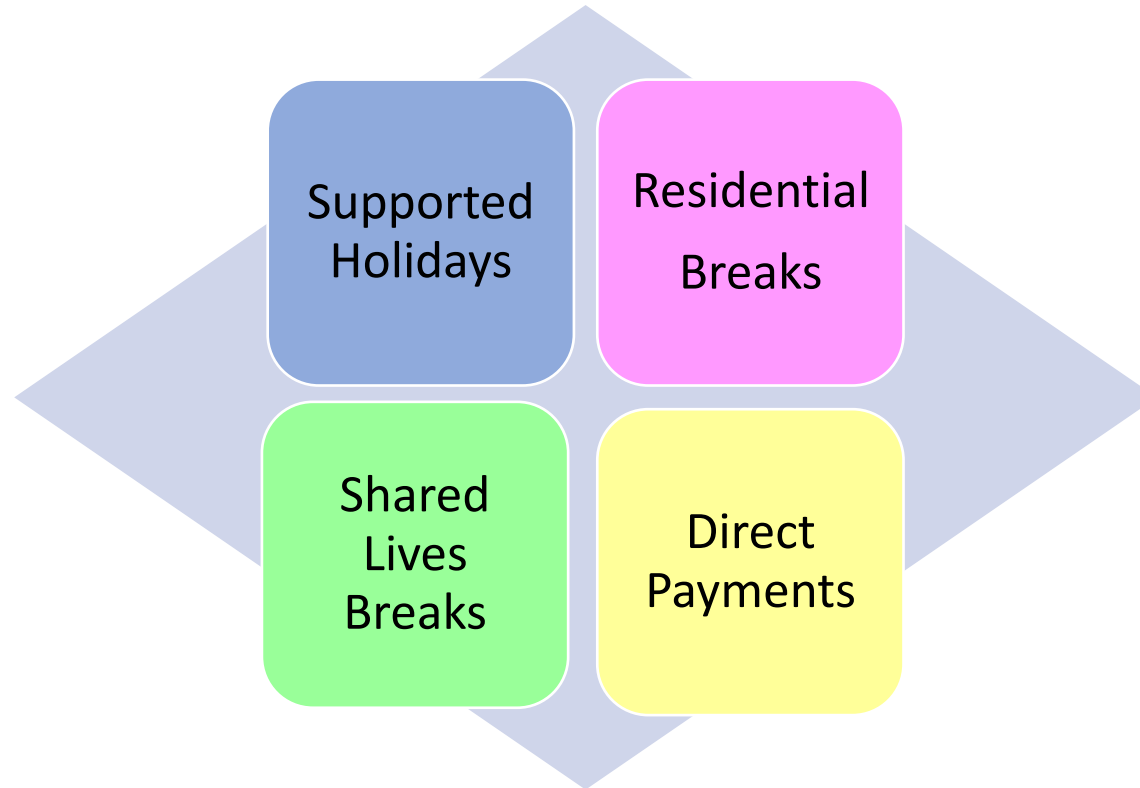
	Flexible respite options (holidays, shared lives, etc.)		£80,000 (indicative allocation)	
C: Cease delivering respite at Budden Crescent and use a range of other residential respite facilities in neighbouring counties.	Purchase 1 bed at Centrica Lodge	£1,108 (indicative cost based on 100% occupancy)	£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 as it will ensure the service is fit for purpose in the future and meets the needs of current and future users. The model offers an appropriate, sufficient, and cost-effective way to provide respite support.

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



What is respite?

- A chance for carers to have a break. Providing for the care and support needs of carers is a statutory duty under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- At the same time respite should provide enriching opportunities and can help people with learning disabilities to live their own good lives and achieve their personal outcomes.
- Respite should be achieved through positive choices, rather than a one-size fits all approach.
- In Monmouthshire, respite is currently achieved in different ways including short breaks/supported holidays, shared lives placements, direct payments, day support and residential respite.

Why did we do a review?

- Respite opportunities within the Council have been evolving since 2011 when the direction of travel to develop a range of respite options, rather than a single residential option, was initiated. This later aligned with the implementation of the Social Services & Wellbeing Act Wales (2014) with its emphasis on personal wellbeing outcomes, individual choice and control.
- Over this period the demand and type of services being used have changed considerably.
- The changes in demand trends were observable in the period leading up to the start of the pandemic in 2020. Similar changes in demand were occurring in other Local Authority areas too.
- This corresponds with how expectations particularly for younger people with learning disability within the service have changed more generally e.g. around where they want to live.
- More people are choosing short breaks/supported holidays, shared lives and direct payments.
- There has been a corresponding decrease in demand for residential respite resulting in a reduced demand for placements within Budden Crescent (the Council's in-house residential respite provision).
- Budden Crescent was closed temporarily during the pandemic. Instead of opening back up, because of how things had changed leading up to and during the pandemic, we took the opportunity to review the overall respite offer within Monmouthshire and consider options for the best way forward.

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

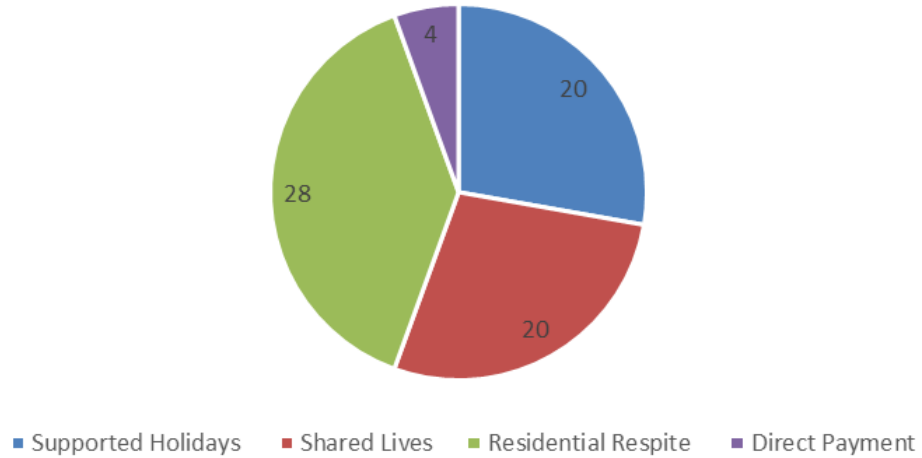


Table 2. No. of People Using Respite Options
2018/19

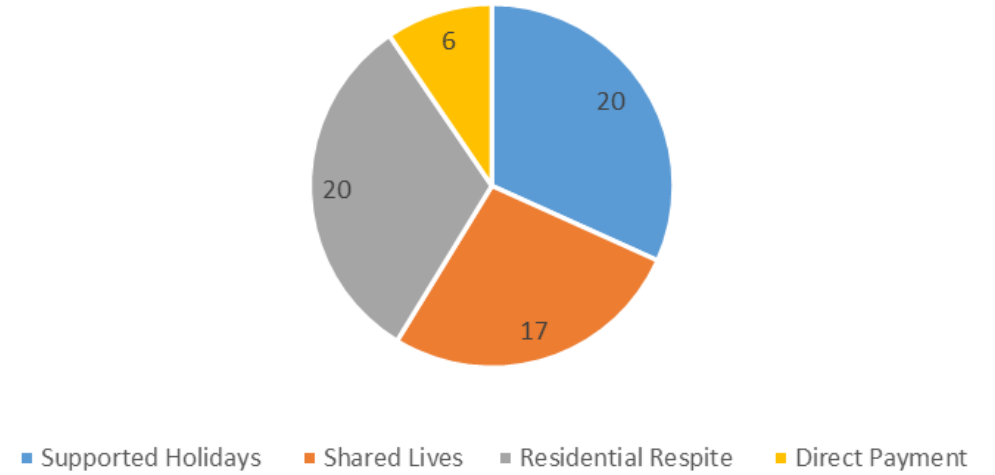
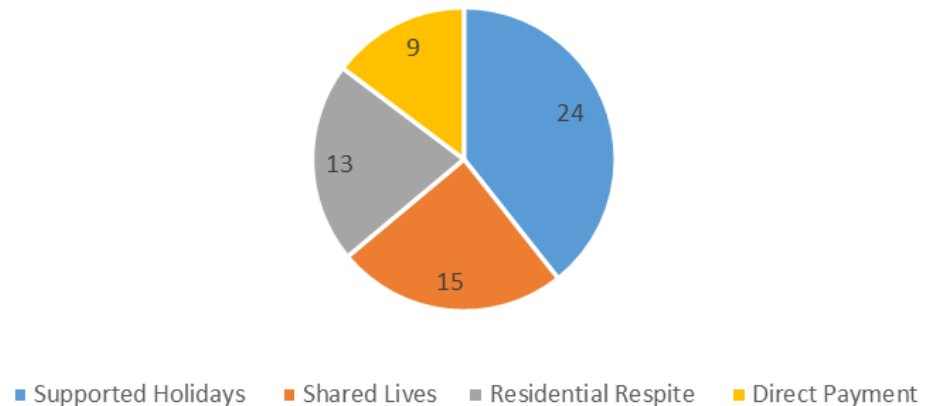


Table 3 No. of People Using Respite Options
2019/20



Charts showing the number of people accessing the different respite support options between 2017/18 and 2019/20

Undertaking the review

- We used service data to look at patterns of how people were using the range of respite opportunities on offer
- We drafted an initial report and recommendations which we used as a basis to consult with people
- There were 2 consultation periods, using a variety of methods, where we sought the views directly from people who currently use respite services and from young people in transition
- Out of the 42 families, 11 families provided views in phase 1 (November 2022) and 25 families provided views in phase 2 (April / May 2023)
- We also asked the- current workforce of Budden Crescent for their views

What conclusions did we draw from the review?

- The review confirmed the way patterns of use had evolved and highlighted aspects of the respite offer that needed to be developed further.
- On the whole people were positive about their experience of respite and liked the fact that there was a variety of options.
- There was concern that everyone should have a range of opportunities available to them, and that we should work to overcome barriers for wheelchair users and people with more complex needs.
- The review highlighted that Budden Crescent was a well-loved and valued provision, but that people were also enjoying new options and opportunities.
- For a few families Budden Crescent has remained their first choice for residential respite.
- That sometimes there can be a tension between the wishes of the cared for and the wishes of the carers.

The aspiration for our Respite Opportunities Service

- A high quality flexible respite service that offers choice, meets people's respite needs and supports individual outcomes.
- For people to have access to a good range of respite support options based on individual assessments and care planning, recognising that every family situation is different.
- Respite opportunities that combine with and compliment a range of other support services for people with learning disabilities and their families.
- An equitable service recognising that people's strengths, interests and needs are unique to them.
- To achieve this will require us to do some things differently, including ceasing to provide an in-house residential provision and commissioning residential respite from neighbouring councils when it is required.

FOCUS On RESIDENTIAL RESPITE

- Leading up to the pandemic residential respite was largely provided in county via Budden Crescent. This provided a high quality service, with a stable team who knew the people who used the service extremely well.
- Overtime demand has significantly reduced to (at best) 25% capacity (pre-covid) calling into question its financial and operational viability.
- The option of a scaled down provision has been explored but is not recommended because of unit costs and issues with operational viability.
- The option of offering placements to other Local Authorities has been explored and discounted because there is a lack of demand.
- Our recommendation is for a commissioning model. This offers choice and flexibility and is able to provide for people with a wide range of need.

Next Steps for Residential Respite

- Continue to engage and build partnerships with current main providers Centrica Lodge and Augusta House.
- Engage with people on individual basis to work out their specific needs and match with appropriate residential services.
- Centrica Lodge is a 6 bed respite facility commissioned by Newport. It is able to offer a service to people with complex needs and wheelchair users. Our recommendation includes continuing to purchase a bed for a full year.
- Augusta House is a 6 bed provision in Ebbw Vale and specialises in complex learning disability.

“Big thumbs up to Augusta house, level of care is great and W still gets to grow their independence, getting their own drink, and choosing where in the spacious building they want to be. Also lovely trips to shop and out for meals or just a drive. W is so happy there. Staff have built up a good connection.”

South East Wales Shared Lives Service

- Shared Lives offers a real alternative to more traditional types of support and accommodation and is often chosen because it is family based, highly personalised, and provides people with the opportunity to develop and maintain independence, friendships, relationships and connections.
- The person needing respite is matched with a shared lives carers who provides respite at arranged times, and sometimes in an emergency situation too.
- Monmouthshire continues to be part of the shared lives management board
- Shared Lives has recently expanded to include RCT and ABuHB.
- Shared Lives runs proactive campaigns for carers and is currently seeking carers that can accommodate for people with more complex needs.

“Shared lives is a home from home, R is able to attend with their friend. R thoroughly enjoys going. (Carer) expressed that the ability for R to have respite for short breaks is supportive and gives her a chance to have a break from her responsibilities”

Respite through holidays / short breaks

- Short breaks can be used as a respite opportunity for people as part of their care and support plan.
- We also help signpost and support families who may want to access suitable holidays for people with learning disabilities over and above what is in their care and support plans. In other situations people chose to use a Direct Payment to support a holiday.
- Holidays are chosen by the person in keeping with their individual tastes, interests and hobbies. Often a holiday is organised with a friendship group.
- From October 2021 to August 2023 12 people have used a holiday as their respite option. These have included:- Eastbourne; Edinburgh Tatoo; Tenby; Blackpool (Elvis trip); Butlins Minehead; Beatles Tour; Torquay.

“Y has returned a different person since returning since holiday and has made a friend as a result, this is an amazing outcome or us both”. (Y’s parent)

“ I enjoyed drinking mocktails and dancing”. (service user X). Mum is really pleased with the company that have support X on her recent holidays. “They provide photos X has taken part in, so that I can see what X has been doing”

Further developments

- Respite at home
- Emergency Respite
- Direct payments

“Z was extremely excited telling me about her holidays. Z always looks forward to going out with the PA’s (personal assistants) and they get so much enjoyment from activities that they do. Z told the social worker at her review that the PA support is 10/10 !!! DP gives the family the flexibility to book respite when needed and also Z the freedom to choose what their respite arrangement looks like.”

People who have more complex needs

- The review highlighted that there needs to be a particular focus on ensuring that there is a range of options for people with more complex needs and wheelchair users recognising that there are challenges to this.
- Existing offers provide a good level of flexibility and bespoke arrangements for people with complex needs but there is more we want to do.
- For example, targeted recruitment for Shared Lives carers looking into assistance for home adaptation to support this; working proactively to engage with holiday providers to shape and develop the type of holidays available; continuing to work in partnership with neighbouring Local Authorities to shape provision.

Note on Carers

- It is vitally important that family carers are supported and know what they are entitled to.
- The Council has a dedicated Carers Team who are proactive in their engagement with carers and support a well-developed carers network both locally and regionally.
- The team provide information, support and advice to carers and support the completion of formal carers' needs assessments under the SSWBA.
- There is on-going increased demand for carers' services
- The Carers Team commission several voluntary sector services that support carers to have a life of their own and/or continue with their caring role including Age Cymru, Care Collective and Building Bridges.

NOTES ON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- There are 210 people with learning disability known to the Community Learning Disability Team currently. This is not the overall number of people with learning disability in the county, that figure is not accurately known.
- There is an increasing number of people who have a neuro developmental diagnosis (autism and associated conditions) as part of their learning disability diagnosis
- Currently 51 people have an assessed need for respite
- There are 107 adults with learning disabilities living with families who provide care and support. Their ages are 54 (aged 18-30), 50 people (aged 31-60), 3 people (aged 61-80)
- People with learning disabilities and their carers are also part of the aging demographic
- We know that more females than males take on caring responsibilities

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Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Feedback to Cabinet

Report Subject Matter: Respite Provision

1.0 Context:

1.1 On 10th August 2023, the People Scrutiny Committee was asked to scrutinise a report on Respite Provision. The scrutiny committee's role is to offer views to the cabinet and make any recommendations, which the Cabinet can accept or reject as part of their future decision-making.

1.2 The People Scrutiny Committee was presented with the following recommendations:

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.

Key points raised by the Committee Members

1.3 The Committee recognised the commitment of the staff group and the high quality of the care and support the respite service at Budden Crescent has provided to the people with a learning disability and their carers over many years. There were mixed views across the committee about the proposals brought to the Scrutiny Committee, but the following offers key points for consideration by the Executive:

- Some members commented that the report didn't outline the full range of respite opportunities available across the county.
- There were some concerns expressed about the data and whether we have a true picture of the demand for the service, both currently and in the future.
- Some members commented that lower levels of use as a resulting from the pandemic should not be a justification to remove services.
- Some members acknowledged that whilst supporting people is very important, if demand for the services offered at Budden Crescent has declined, the cost implications cannot be ignored, acknowledging that it leaves less funding available to provide other types of respite.
- Some members felt that relying on facilities provided by other local authorities may be short sighted, given the increasing ageing population and advocated the need for some in-county respite provision.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- Concerns were raised over the ability of the alternative respite provision, to respond to emergencies and how flexible the proposed alternative arrangements would be to meet those needs?
- Members questioned whether Budden Crescent could operate a wider respite model to cater for people suffering with dementia or learning disabilities and whether this would make the service financially viable. Members heard that this would be very difficult to staff, as different care skills would be needed for people with different health conditions. However, Members are aware that Centrica Lodge in Newport operates a wider respite model, catering for elderly Care, learning disabilities, mental health conditions and younger adults. Members question therefore, why Monmouthshire cannot diversify to meet a number of care needs and suggest this is something the Executive should explore. The possibility of a regional facility was also highlighted, recognising that other authorities are facing similar challenges.
- There were mixed feelings about the review, some members advocating the need for an independent review, but others commented that it was a robust report.

Public Open Forum

- 1.3 Written contributions had been received in advance of the meeting and had been shared with all who attended. A contribution reported how the family felt let down by the Council in terms of the proposals to close Budden Crescent and how alternative respite provision would not meet their needs. A written contribution from another service user highlighted the importance of the service to her and her relative. A written contribution from an academic was also circulated to Members and a lady who has sent a written contribution attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of her family, explaining how the service currently provided at Budden Crescent met the needs of their family and how they would very much struggle without it.

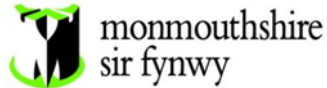
Formal Outcome of the Scrutiny

- 1.4 The Committee made the following recommendations:
1. That if the Executive does close Budden Crescent, it fully reviews the respite options, given that majority of the options are currently unviable for those with complex needs who need 24/7 care. The Committee requests the Executive ensures that alternative types of respite support and 'shared lives' is accessible to people and provides the appropriate level of care and support for each individual receiving respite.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

2. That the Executive ensures that social services fully engages intensively with the families who are unhappy with the recommendation to close Budden Crescent to provide more intensive care and support them and to see how their needs can be met.

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SUBJECT:	MARCHES FORWARD PARTNERSHIP
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	6TH SEPTEMBER 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To establish a collaborative “Marches Forward Partnership” with neighbouring local authorities, Herefordshire Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Councils.
- 1.2 The Partnership will provide a flexible umbrella framework for joint working which supports local service delivery, based around how people and places function, rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries. It also enables the Council to harness the unique value of Monmouthshire’s cross border location.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet approves:

- 2.1 The establishment of a ‘Marches Forward Partnership’ with neighbouring local authorities.
- 2.2 The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the local authorities to reflect the spirit of cooperation and joint working between them. **Appendix One – Memorandum of Understanding.**
- 2.3 Support for the development of the ‘Marches Forward Partnership’ through representation on a joint local authority Leaders Group.
- 2.4 Delegation to the Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Communities and Place to proceed with development of a work programme to meet the objectives within the MOU, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Council’s Community and Corporate Plan sets the ambition for the Council and county of Monmouthshire. This partnership provides an opportunity to work towards these objectives in a complementary manner.
- 3.2 In addition, the Well-being of Future Generations Act is the fundamental legislation in Wales that requires the Council to carry out sustainable development, this should ensure that present needs are met, without compromising future generations in meeting their own needs. In planning services and taking action to meet its well-being objectives, the Council must consider, but also demonstrate that it has applied sustainable governance principles in its decision-making, which includes working in collaboration with others, which can be seen within every goal.
- 3.3 The Council also recognises the need to ensure it takes a financially responsible approach to its use of resources, to ensure that it meets the needs of its citizens in the most cost-effective way, this includes continuing to bid for funding programmes that have been introduced following the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, sharing best

practices and supporting the financial resilience of services through joint working initiatives.

- 3.4 The Council has been working collaboratively with Herefordshire, Powys County and Shropshire Councils to develop a common understanding of each other's organisations. The aim has been to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value in working together, supporting each other's strategic aims and leveraging combined knowledge, resources and activities.
- 3.5 Geographically, the neighbouring local authorities cover a contiguous area which straddles over 80% of the English and Welsh border. Commuting patterns and access to retail, education, business support and healthcare services all reflect the functional profile of the area.
- 3.6 The local authorities are bound together by common purpose based on a high-quality rural environment, but with the consequent of more expensive access to services, changing service demands from an ageing population and low levels of productivity and employment growth. Given this profile, the local authorities are keen to explore a shared ambition for rural based growth, identifying opportunities for strategic collaboration on agreed projects and initiatives. This approach is aimed at ensuring effective local joint working and provides a basis, using the power of the collective area, to develop investment propositions for UK Government and partners.
- 3.7 Whilst the local authorities have interacted with one another as neighbouring areas on many levels for a long time, these activities have not previously been fully coordinated. There is now an opportunity and willingness to align respective strategic visions, plans and resources for the maximum benefit for the Marches and cross border area.
- 3.8 This emphasis on greater cross border understanding has intensified for many local authorities over recent years, with a shared focus on collaborative working. This is supported by greater flexibility and an emphasis on strategic collaboration from Government, recently illustrated by the Wales and Cornwall Celtic-Heritage Collaboration Agreement.
- 3.9 Covering the gateway between England and Wales, a 'Marches Forward Partnership' provides opportunity for the border local authorities to coordinate future joint working under a flexible umbrella framework. It is aimed at supporting a shared understanding of 'life on the borders' as a focus for strategic joint working and to unlock additional investment into the area.
- 3.10 The Partnership will focus its collaboration only where it adds the greatest value. All participating councils will maintain independent decision making and local delivery within each local authority area, where this continues to be most appropriate, including involvement in other beneficial partnership arrangements.

Activity to Date

- 3.11 This is the first-time neighbouring authorities in England and Wales have proposed to work together in a planned cross border collaboration which covers a population of more than 737,000 residents and an area of approximately 1,140,000 hectares.
- 3.12 A strategic cross border partnership provides opportunity to support government ambitions around Union Connectivity, improving joined up thinking between England and Wales, helping to increase investment and accelerate delivery of key infrastructure projects.

- 3.13 Early scoping work has highlighted the potential to innovate and look at creative solutions which are not bound by statutory delivery timescales or regulatory frameworks. The Partnership offers a flexible framework to explore how local services, community and corporate priorities, can be delivered differently using shared skill sets and an unusual level of freedom. It provides a unique opportunity to focus on the added value of working as a collective whole, whilst not seeking to duplicate or impact on individual partner relationships or partnerships explored in the future by constituent partners.
- 3.14 Whilst initially focused on short term opportunities for more efficient and effective service delivery, the Partnership also provides opportunity for constituent partners to seek and gain greater recognition of the need for joint working across borders with respective Governments. As such, it provides a platform to raise the profile of the area and seek greater investment for delivery.
- 3.15 Functionally the area is already united, with significant flows of people between the Mid Wales-English border in all areas including healthcare, education, skill development, jobs and service provision. This cross-border movement is attributable to several interrelated factors including geographic convenience, specialities in sector and service provision and infrastructure availability.
- 3.16 Cross border partnership working has been a focal point for some time. Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire already operate as a collective economic geography under the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and whilst there is not a similar LEP structure for Wales, cross border joint working is a focus of activity between Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire on a local service delivery basis. The Marches has also been progressing conversations, for some time, on the potential for a cross border Growth Deal with Powys. This is based on recognition of the importance of the cross-border relationship between Mid Wales and the Marches.
- 3.17 Between Summer 2022 and January 2023, Local Authority Leaders within the Marches discussed, with the Marches LEP, options for securing more freedoms to make decisions at a local level. Such discussions were also driven by consideration of the types of means available in the future to unlock greater investment into the area as an enabler of growth.
- 3.18 At the same time, local authority Leaders across Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire started to explore areas of collective interest and ambitions to bring together both Welsh and English Governments to support, in principle, joint working across borders. It was agreed that joint scoping should take place across the local authorities to understand shared priorities and opportunities that are worthy of further investigation. This was aimed at identifying those key focal points where strategic thinking and joint work at the collective scale provides the most benefit.
- 3.19 Alongside this early scoping work, ongoing conversations are taking place with both Wrexham Council and Telford and Wrekin Council as the two other local authorities with a shared interest in this functional geography. An open invitation has been established for these partners to join the Partnership, as the development work progresses, and more information is known and shared on priority areas and joint working opportunities.

Key Areas of Shared Interest

- 3.20 From the early scoping work, key areas of shared interest have been identified around nature and climate adaptation, energy, transport and connectivity, housing, digital, economic regeneration, skills and innovation. In June 2023, a draft MOU was developed to reflect some of the outputs from the early scoping work. This is summarised within the following six objectives:
- **Objective 1:** Data, Evidence and Research: Leveraging joint intelligence and research expertise to improve the quality of life for our rural, cross border communities through sharing information and carrying out research.
 - **Objective 2:** Nature, Energy and Climate Adaptation: Working together to identify and collaborate on strategic scale opportunities based around our high-quality natural environment, addressing current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery.
 - **Objective 3:** Transport and Digital Transformation: Working together to improve rural connectivity, to level up access to jobs, education and opportunity and bring mutual benefits for our neighbouring areas.
 - **Objective 4:** Sustainable Communities: Working together on the development of sustainable communities, creating a social infrastructure offer which realises the growth and sustainability of the rural economy and supports our residents, employers and users of our geography.
 - **Objective 5:** Food, Rural Development and Visitor Economy: Working together to identify opportunities for closer collaboration which encourages the economic growth of our rural economy, developing and promoting our unique offer.
 - **Objective 6:** Government and Strategic Relations: Working together on strategic communications to raise the regional, national and international profile of our area.
- 3.21 These objectives now provide a starting point, to be built on through the 'Cross Border Marches Partnership'.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 3.22 In supporting the MOU, Cabinet is asked to agree that:
- Support is given to the Leader and Chief Executive to respond and progress work within the MOU, with each partner Local Authority in the Partnership taking individual responsibility for relevant Cabinet and Council briefings, as needed, to update on progress and ensure widespread support for this work.
 - The MOU will run for an 18-month term before review;
 - The broader activity of the Partnership may evolve and expand during implementation and will be reflected in subsequent reviews;
 - Nothing in the MOU will be interpreted as a commitment of funds from each local authority; and
 - The MOU does not restrict, in any way, other arrangements that a local authority may wish to develop independently.

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

4.1 The positive impacts of this proposal are as follows; a full assessment can be found in **Appendix Two - Integrated Impact Assessment:**

- Four local authorities will work together is to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value.
- The rural economy and green growth are at the top of the agenda.
- Areas of cross border shared interests are likely to include transport, skills and housing alongside energy, climate change and digital connectivity.
- The Partnership will provide an opportunity to join forces to apply for funding from government on major projects that will benefit the collective region.
- It is anticipated that the planned collaboration and the council's willingness to work together will increase overall government investment, potentially unlocking millions of pounds for identified initiatives.

4.2 There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Significant opportunity is provided by the development of the 'Marches Forward Partnership'. The Partnership provides a flexible umbrella framework for joint working which supports local service delivery based around how people and places function rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries. It also enables the Council to harness the unique value of Monmouthshire's cross border location.

5.2. The Partnership is not intended to be a legal entity. There will be no formal governing structure and no elements of the MOU will be legally binding. As a result, there are no legal risks to the Council since the Partnership will operate on an informal basis, based around joint working on areas of common purpose.

5.3. Mapping has been undertaken to understand existing strategic partnership arrangements across the area. As a result, the development of the Partnership and its intended work programme do not pose a risk in terms of duplicating existing arrangements. Instead, the Partnership will only focus on areas of added value, addressing an existing gap in strategic cross border working between England and Wales.

5.4. As a flexible arrangement, each local authority within the Partnership has the freedom to either not undertake a particular activity or not participate further in the Partnership at any point in time. The Partnership does not therefore pose a risk in terms of prejudicing or constraining any of the constituent partners or groupings of partners in being involved in alternative partnership arrangements. The MOU does not restrict, in any way, other arrangements that a partner local authority may wish to develop independently.

5.5. The risks and opportunities relating to this report are predominately focused on Monmouthshire's role in developing an informal partnership and the associated working arrangements. Whilst this poses resource implications, the proposed management structure for the Partnership is focused on joint resourcing. Each local authority will share skills, data and learning as well as the provision of an Officer lead for thematic working groups. There are significant opportunities for greater efficiency

and effectiveness through joint working initiatives as well as the potential to use the 'Cross Border Marches Partnership' as a platform to secure wider investment support.

6. REASONS

- 6.1 The 'Marches Forward Partnership' offers opportunity to establish a collaboration framework for neighbouring local authority areas with shared needs and interests. It provides a flexible basis for joint working without the need for formal governing structures and without impacting existing strategic partnerships or individual local authority working arrangements.
- 6.2. It offers the ability to consider where strategic joint working across borders between England and Wales provides the most significant value and can bring together shared resources and skill sets to maximise delivery and opportunity for the area.
- 6.3. Across the partner local authorities, the 'Marches Forward Partnership' is seen as an opportunity to:
 - Focus on the shared geography and maximising the potential of the area.
 - Provide the right tools for effective service delivery within each local authority.
 - Understand and work together to attract the right investment, for example for critical infrastructure.
 - Understand and innovate to address the needs of rural communities.
 - Harness the value of shared rural assets.
 - Align policy and investment drivers to obtain the best from cross border political ambitions.
 - Understand future trends and service demands across a functional area.
 - Focus on where collaboration adds the greatest value.
 - Share learning and best practice.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The MOU makes clear that nothing in the agreement involves a commitment of funds from the partner local authorities. Work to date has used existing local authority resources, focused on shared staff time and skills. It has not involved any other financial implications.
- 7.2. The Partnership provides opportunity for continued sharing of staff resources to support development of cross border joint working. Through the development of the Partnership work programme, partners may decide to commission work on particular topics to progress key areas of activity. Future work by the Partnership may therefore involve an ask for partner investment. However, the Partnership framework provides a basis to prioritise, agree and divide such costs across the collective partners, thereby providing benefit and reducing the financial implications to each individual organisation.
- 7.3. Given the informal working relationship under the strategic collaboration, the MOU does make clear that each local authority will have individual responsibility for relevant Cabinet and Council briefings. This will include ensuring all the necessary financial agreements are in place within each partner local authority for any future key areas of work associated with the Partnership. Political leadership and oversight through a Leaders Group will ensure regular updates on progress and future work programmes.

7.4. As a strategic collaboration, the Partnership provides opportunity as a means of unlocking new funding into the area. Using the additional value of the unique cross border location and collective approach, the Partnership provides a platform to attract investment for effective service delivery and critical infrastructure across the area.

8. CONSULTEES

Cabinet

Strategic Leadership Team

Local MPs and AMs

UK Government and Welsh Government colleagues

WLGA

CCR City and Deal and Western Gateway colleagues

Communities and Place Leadership Team

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix One – Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix Two – Integrated Impact Assessment

10. AUTHORS:

Frances O'Brien – Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Cath Fallon – Head of Enterprise and Community Animation

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Appendix One – Memorandum of Understanding



Draft MOU Marches
Forward Partnership-



<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Cath Fallon</p> <p>Phone no: 07557 190969 Email: cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To seek approval for the Council to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Herefordshire Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Councils for collaboration as a 'Marches Forward Partnership'.</p>
<p>Name of Service area Communities and Place</p>	<p>Date 21st August 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	This proposal seeks to have a positive impact on the county's residents, by working in partnership to tackle cross border shared interests and boost investment into the region.	None	None
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
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?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	<p>The Partnership provides a flexible umbrella framework for joint working which supports local service delivery based around how people and places function, rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries.</p> <p>The Partnership will seek to reduce barriers to service delivery, benefiting those experiencing socio economic disadvantage.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.</p>	<p>The four authorities will work together to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value.</p>

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	Neutral impact Where possible, the Council will work with its neighbouring Welsh Authority, Powys, to promote the Welsh language as part of this cross-border initiative. We will ensure that any material produced by members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.	None	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Neutral impact. This proposal does not involve the appointment of staff. However, on a general basis, the Communities and Place Directorate encourages the appointment of Welsh Language speakers and offers staff Welsh Language training	None	N/A
Service delivery	Neutral impact	None	We will ensure that any material produced by

Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language			members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.
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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>Positive: Positively contributes to the Council's requirement to take a financially responsible approach to its use of resources, to ensure that it meets the needs of its citizens in the most cost-effective way. This includes continuing to bid for funding programmes that have been introduced following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, sharing best practices and supporting the financial resilience of services through joint working initiatives like this one.</p> <p>In addition, Partners will undertake activities which will seek to understand and articulate the needs of existing and prospective employers to improve the ability for learning, skills and business support provision across borders to meet demands.</p>	<p>It is an on-going priority for the Council to work collaboratively to maximise efficiency and capitalise on opportunities.</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?
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p>	<p>Negative: None identified</p> <p>Positive: Early scoping work for the Partnership identified key areas of service alignment and priority across the neighbouring authorities. As a grouping with a shared, high quality, rural environment, a key thematic focus has already emerged around nature, energy and climate adaptation.</p> <p>This is reflected in the MOU which highlights opportunity to work together on strategic scale projects to address current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery.</p> <p>The Partnership could also support rural resilience through work around land management and exploring common local authority aspirations around net zero and renewable energy solutions.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	<p>The Partnership provides a significant opportunity for the partner local authorities to support one another on climate and net zero plans and local delivery.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive: Partners will be working together to identify opportunities for understanding cross border movements to access health provision and the infrastructure needed to support this.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	<p>N/A</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?
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Positive: Partners will be working together on the development of sustainable communities, creating a social infrastructure offer which realises the growth and sustainability of the rural economy and supports our residents, employers and users of our geography. Negative: None identified</p>	N/A
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Positive: Partners will be working together to identify and collaborate on strategic scale opportunities based around our high-quality natural environment, addressing current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery. Negative: None identified</p>	N/A.
<p>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</p>	<p>Positive: Partners will be working together to support a coherent cultural and visitor economy offer. Negative: None identified</p>	N/A
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Positive: Partners will be leveraging joint intelligence and research expertise to improve the quality of life for all our rural, cross border communities. Negative: None identified</p>	N/A

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?

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>Whilst initially focused on short term opportunities for more efficient and effective service delivery, the Partnership also provides opportunity for constituent partners to seek and gain greater recognition of the need for joint working across borders with respective Governments.</p> <p>As such, it provides a platform to raise the profile of the area and seek greater investment for delivery in the future.</p>	
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The 'Marches Forward Partnership' brings together strategic joint working between Shropshire, Herefordshire, Powys and Monmouthshire local authorities.</p> <p>Its purpose is to work together to tackle cross border shared interests and boost investment into the region.</p>	N/A

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 Council is engaging with existing partners to make them aware of the opportunity and keep them informed of progress as the Partnership evolves.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The proposal is about strengthening and improving existing services, providing opportunities to explore areas of collective interest and ambitions to bring together both Welsh and English Governments to support, in principle, joint working across borders and enable efficiencies.</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="203 603 528 746">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p data-bbox="589 312 1312 568">This strategic cross border Partnership will provide opportunity to support government ambitions around Union Connectivity, improving join up between England and Wales and helping to increase investment and accelerate delivery of key infrastructure projects which will aid sustainable development opportunities.</p>	<p data-bbox="1335 312 1391 344">N/A</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	N/A	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	N/A	None.	N/A

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

The Marches Forward Partnership brings together strategic joint working between Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire local authorities. It covers a population of approximately 737,000 residents and covers an area of approximately 1,140,000 hectares.

This strategic cross border Partnership will provide opportunity to support government ambitions around Union Connectivity, improving join up between England and Wales and helping to increase investment and accelerate delivery of key infrastructure projects.

Early scoping work has highlighted the potential to innovate and look at creative solutions which are not bound by statutory delivery timescales or regulatory frameworks. The Partnership offers a flexible framework to explore how local services and corporate priorities can be delivered differently using shared skill sets and an unusual level of freedom.

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?

. This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template

Positive -

The positive impacts of this proposal are:

- Four local authorities will work together to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value.
- The rural economy and green growth are at the top of the agenda.
- Areas of cross border shared interests are likely to include transport, skills and housing alongside energy, climate change and digital connectivity.
- The Partnership will provide an opportunity to join forces to apply for funding from government on major projects that will benefit the collective region.
- It is anticipated that the planned collaboration and the council's willingness to work together will increase overall government investment, potentially unlocking millions of pounds for identified initiatives.
- We will assess the impact of any subsequent decision of the partnership, which requires it, in line with the relevant legislation that applies to that organisation.

Negative

None identified.

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
Progress the proposal	On-going.	Chief Officer for Communities and Place
Consider and plan next steps and responsibilities.	On going	Chief Officer for Communities and Place

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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.	SLT/Cabinet Members	July 2023	Give more consideration to understanding the cross-border movements to access health provision and the infrastructure needed to support this.
2.	Cabinet Report	September 2023	

SUBJECT:	Proposed Home to School Transport Policy 2024/25
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	6th September 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the legal responsibilities for the provision of school transport. The legislation places a duty on local authorities to review their transport policy on an annual basis. The Transport Policy needs to be confirmed by the 1st October for application in the following academic year.
- 1.2 The draft policy has been the subject of public consultation and scrutiny consideration and has been amended to reflect the feedback received. The purpose of this report is to consider the proposed Transport Policy for 24-25 and determine whether to consider its adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the proposed Transport Policy 24-25 contained in Appendix 2, is agreed and the policy is published on or before 1st October 2023 in accordance with the requirements of the Learner Travel Measure.

3. 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 and confirm how statutory and discretionary policies 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 public consultation responses has been included in Appendix 1 and can be broken down into five themes, which are considered in detail below.

Free Transport for Faith Learners

3.3.1 We received feedback from survey respondents and representatives of faith schools that the proposed drafting in the home to school transport policy was too narrow and was contradictory to the proposals outlined in the consultation. In addition, we have also received correspondence from Cytun Cymru and a parent challenging the amended drafting and instead proposing that the eligibility criteria for faith schools should be amended to include “the learner’s application having been made on grounds of faith or conscience”. They have also proposed that when determining nearest suitable, this should be based on the denomination selected by the learners parents, whether or not they practice the said denominational faith; that siblings of learners who are already in receipt of free transport to a faith school will be presumed to have applied to the same school on the grounds of faith or conscience unless the contrary is proved and that confirmation of an admission to a faith school on the grounds of faith or conscience should only be sought once for each learner.

Response

The provision of free home to school transport to faith schools is not a statutory responsibility, but Local Authorities can choose to provide discretionary transport based on their defined eligibility criteria. In addition, the Learner Travel Measure is clear that where parental preference is applied and they choose to send their children to a school which is not their nearest suitable, they lose their statutory entitlement to free home to school transport. The proposed amendments to the eligibility criteria for learners attending faith schools is designed to ensure that discretionary free transport continues to be made available for those learners who meet the distance eligibility criteria and the learner being able to meet the faith criteria contained in their chosen school’s oversubscription criteria. If however a parent has applied parental preference and selected the school for non-faith reasons they will not be able to access free home to school transport, unless the school is either their nearest suitable or catchment school.

We note the proposal that the eligibility criteria should be amended to include conscience, we do not however recommend the adoption of this proposal given that there is no objective mechanism to assess “conscience”. Welsh Government officials have confirmed that as there is no statutory responsibility for Monmouthshire to provide free transport to faith schools, it is a matter for Monmouthshire to determine how they define the eligibility criteria for discretionary transport. We would not propose to withdraw transport from any learners who are already in receipt of discretionary free transport unless their circumstances change, e.g., they apply to change schools or they move home.

We note that Cytun Cymru has raised concerns that faith schools may not consider faith as a criterion unless they are oversubscribed. We acknowledge that not all applicants to faith schools may be automatically evaluated against faith criteria and the drafting has been amended to reference that the application for transport will be assessed against the learner being able to meet the faith criteria contained in their chosen school’s

oversubscription criteria. The Commissioning Team may consult with schools to confirm that learners can meet the said faith criteria.

Scrutiny Committee were reassured that those already in receipt of transport would not be impacted and that those who choose to attend a faith school for faith reasons will not be impacted by the proposal.

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 will not 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.

Scrutiny Committee raised a number of issues, including the need to ensure that all public bus drivers have a DBS, preferably a Monmouthshire DBS, that they comply with the Learner Travel Measure which includes seat belts and driver training, and that CCTV is used on the vehicles and used to investigate safeguarding incidents, particularly as members of the public may also be travelling on the vehicles. All public service vehicles need to comply with prescribed legislation to ensure the safety of their passengers. Scrutiny Committee were advised that of the 23 reported safeguarding incidents for the

academic year 22/23, only 1 related to learners who were allocated season tickets on public buses.

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 they are able to access home to school transport.

Schools Suitability

- 3.3.4 The consultation proposed the removal of the consideration of a school's 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 dis-incentive 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 learners 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 learners nearest suitable school. Monmouthshire already exceeds the statutory 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 a pickup point 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. Concern was also expressed 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, that those walking will behave responsibly, and drivers will comply with the law. The introduction of the reduced 20mph speed limit will also have a positive impact for those learners walking to school.

Scrutiny Committee asked that we consider further the proposal to reduce the notice period for the removal of transport to one academic term. As a result of this feedback, it has been agreed that we will not progress this proposed amendment.

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 the feedback received and proposed amendments to reflect the valuable contributions made by respondents.

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

The proposed amendments will not have any negative impacts on corporate parenting. The proposal to apply an eligibility criteria to applications for faith transport will negatively impact on parents who have selected a faith school not for faith reasons if it is not their nearest suitable or catchment school as they will not be able to access free home to school transport. Similarly, parents who have previously accessed free transport to a school which is not their nearest suitable or catchment school due to the special measures status of a school, will lose access to free transport if the proposed policy is adopted.

Conversely, Post 16 learners attending out of County Welsh medium and faith schools will now be guaranteed access to a concessionary seat on home to school transport.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Dis-benefits	Comments
Leave the Transport Policy as originally drafted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy will fail to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the respondents. The Council will have failed in its duty to consider the consultation responses. 	This option should be discounted as it falls short of the reasonable expectations of consultees and the standards required of an engaged and listening Council
Agree to the amendments proposed following the consultation exercise and review by Scrutiny Committee	<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. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 The Transport Policy is evaluated on an annual basis and considers the impact of any legislative or policy changes, financial constraints and learning throughout the year.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 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 and the feedback from Scrutiny Committee.
- 7.2 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 the removal of discretionary transport or a reversion to statutory distance criteria at this time.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 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 the costs will increase for the forthcoming academic year.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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.

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Monitoring Officer
S151 Officer
Public consultation
People Scrutiny Committee

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014
Cabinet Report 3rd May 2023
People Scrutiny Report 10th August 2023 and resulting feedback.

11. AUTHOR:

Debra Hill-Howells Head of Decarbonisation, Transport & Support Services
Frances O'Brien Chief Officer, Communities and Place

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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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.
- Need to include suitable faith school so that parents can choose to send their children to a different denominational faith school than their nearest one.
- National, European and International Human Rights legislation requires the state to ensure or respect the rights of parents to have children educated in accordance with their religious, moral and philosophical convictions, parents therefore have the right to choose to have their child educated in a mainstream, Catholic or Church in Wales school.
- The faith criteria are only applied by faith schools if they are oversubscribed and the vast majority of children attending faith schools are neither Catholic nor Church in Wales.
- Proposal that the eligibility criteria should be broadened to include conscience.
- Proposal that siblings of children already in a faith school should have automatic transport.
- That applicants for faith education should only be required to meet the eligibility criteria once.

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 due to safeguarding issues.
- Should provide transport based on the statutory criteria so that 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 to separate learners from 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 lightning 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 mainstream 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 (online 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 e.g., 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.

This Policy will be used to assess new applications for faith transport. For those who are already in receipt of transport their transport will continue unless their circumstances have changed e.g., they have moved house.

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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 year. 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 learners 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 learners 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 learners age or understanding requires this.

If the route to school is deemed to be unsafe (with regards to the degree of risk involved and whether the accompanying adult is at risk from the traffic situation), then the learner cannot be expected to walk to school even though the distance from home to school is below the prescribed 1.5 miles (primary) and 2 miles (secondary) distance limit that applies to his/her age. In such circumstances, the learner is entitled to free transport.

Discretionary Transport for Learners attending Faith and Welsh Medium Schools

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

- Distance eligibility criteria being met and
- the learner being able to meet the faith criteria contained in their chosen school's oversubscription criteria.

The Commissioning Unit may consult with schools to confirm that learners can meet the said faith criteria.

Suitable in this context means age appropriate and faith appropriate, so that learners can access their nearest Catholic, or nearest Church in Wales schools depending on their parents' convictions.

If, however, the learner does not meet the faith criteria then the application will be assessed against the Council's distance eligibility criteria to their nearest or catchment school.

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 for secondary learners. 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.

In the circumstances where a route assessment has been undertaken by the Council's Road Safety team and it is deemed unsafe, free transport will be provided.

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 for secondary learners 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.

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.

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.

Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Integrated Impact Assessment document
(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

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<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Debra Hill-Howells</p> <p>Phone no: 0775 851405</p> <p>E-mail: debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>The report seeks consent to consult on the Draft Transport Policy for 24-25. The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 requires that policies are reviewed annually, and the agreed policy is published by the 1st October for application in the following academic year. The report provides a draft Transport Policy for 24-25 and seeks approval to undertake consultation before a final version is presented to Members in September.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Decarbonisation, Transport & Support Services</p>	<p>Date 05th September 2023 (6th revision)</p> <p>(11th July 2022, revision 2: Sept 2022, revision 3: April 23, revision 4: 20th July 2023, revision 5 23rd August 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 proposal details the Transport Policy for statutory learners attending state funded education settings between the age of 4 and 16. It details the eligibility criteria for access to free transport which provides greater opportunity than that prescribed in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (LTM) e.g., transport is provided for those learners attending their nearest suitable or catchment school who live 1.5 miles from a primary school or 2 miles from a secondary.</p>	<p>Free home to school transport for post 16's is not provided in accordance with the LTM. This can create particular problems for secondary learners attending Welsh Medium or faith education as they need to travel out of county.</p>	<p>We provide concessionary travel to Post 16 pupils; however, this is dependent on spare seats within existing contracts. We will ensure that there all Post 16 Welsh medium learners have access to concessionary travel if required.</p> <p>We are reviewing the opportunities to amend public bus service timetables and increase provision to allow more learners to travel on public buses. This will also increase travel opportunities for the wider community.</p>
Disability	<p>The existing policy provides criteria for the provision of transport for learners with ALN and accessible transport is provided based on their assessed needs.</p> <p>All learners attending primary and secondary settings are able to apply for discretionary transport if they have a medical condition or disability.</p> <p>If a primary aged learners' parents have a medical condition which prevents them from supporting their child walking to school, they can apply for discretionary transport if they live less than 1.5 miles from their nearest suitable school. No changes are proposed to this provision</p>	<p>No changes to existing policy provision</p>	<p>The discretionary application process has not been changed to ensure that learners with a medically assessed condition which impacts their ability to walk to school can access free transport.</p> <p>The distance criteria applied by MCC is lower than the statutory guidelines which results in more learners being eligible for free transport.</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	.The provision of free school transport is available to all eligible pupils regardless of their gender.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	Where incidents of bullying or harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Team works with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment.
Marriage or civil partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	We will provide discretionary transport to any learner with a proven medical condition that meets the eligibility criteria or due to their condition are unable to walk to school or access public transport. We will work with the learner, their parents and the school to ensure that anyone who is pregnant and meets the criteria is able to safely travel on school transport.	N/A	We will work with individual learners, parents and schools to ensure that school transport is safe for pregnant learners.

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?
Race	. The provision of free school transport is available to any learner that meets the eligibility criteria.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or racial harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	Where incidents of bullying or racial harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Team will work with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment due to a learner's ethnicity.
Religion or Belief	.Free home to school transport is provided for learners attending their nearest faith school.	<p>Parents may wish to exercise parental preference and place their children in a faith school that is not their nearest, which will result in the loss of free school transport.</p> <p>The amended policy proposals introduce a requirement for learners attending faith schools to have met the distance eligibility criteria and the learner being able to meet the faith criteria contained in their chosen school's oversubscription criteria to be able to access discretionary free home to school transport.</p>	The provision of discretionary free school transport to faith schools already exceeds the requirements of the LTM.

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	The provision of free school transport is available to any learner that meets the eligibility criteria.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	Where incidents of bullying or harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Unit will work with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment

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	. The provision of free school transport is available to any learner that meets the eligibility criteria.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	<p>Where incidents of bullying or harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Unit will work with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment.</p> <p>Equalities training will be provided as soon as it is available from the corporate training service and bespoke advice will be sought for individual cases.</p>

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>The provision of free home to school transport ensures that all learners have equal access to education. The distance criteria are more favourable than that included within the LTM which results in more learners being able to access free transport. Where parents are able to provide current medical information that confirms they are unable to walk or drive their primary aged children to school, discretionary transport is provided. Subsidized concessionary seats are made available where vacant seats exist. The authority is currently reviewing the opportunities to increase public bus provision to enable more learners and members of the public to have accessible to sustainable transport. More passengers on public buses will assist the financial viability of the services, thereby safeguarding the services. Learners have the opportunity to apply for free transport to their nearest suitable or catchment schools if they are different and out of county schools will be considered as part of the nearest suitable evaluation process.</p>	<p>Post 16 pupils are not entitled to free school transport and are therefore reliant on vacant seats being available and their parents being able to support the £440 annual cost.</p> <p>Secondary Welsh medium and faith schools are outside the county boundaries which does mean that journey times are longer.</p>	<p>Where parents can demonstrate that their primary aged pupils have medical conditions that prevent them from walking to school, discretionary transport may be awarded.</p> <p>The Council is working with bus operators and Transport for Wales to maximise the opportunities for maintaining or enhancing public bus service provision which will have broader benefits beyond learners.</p> <p>The Council will ensure that for Post 16 Welsh learners attending their nearest suitable school, concessionary travel will be available if required.</p>

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>	<p>The LTM measure provides LAs with the ability to provide discretionary transport to Welsh medium schools. This policy proposes that all learners wishing to attend Welsh medium education will have access to free transport to their nearest suitable Welsh medium school if they meet the distance eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>If parents choose to exercise parental preference and choose a school setting that is not their nearest suitable Welsh medium school, transport will not be provided. This is in alignment with the LTM and mainstream education.</p> <p>Post 16 learners will not have access to free school transport which creates transport issues for secondary learners who have to travel out of county.</p>	<p>Post 16 learners will be able to access concessionary travel to their nearest suitable school.</p>
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>		<p>Recruiting drivers is extremely challenging in the current climate and their driving qualifications take priority over their Welsh language skills.</p> <p>Staff can only access Welsh language training courses where they do not impact on school transport duties.</p>	<p>All colleagues have access to Welsh language training courses.</p>
<p>Service delivery</p>	<p>Parents can apply for school transport through the medium of Welsh. All</p>	<p>Drivers and passenger assistants may not be able to</p>	<p>All colleagues have access to Welsh language training</p>

Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	communications can be undertaken through the Welsh Language.	converse in Welsh on the vehicles.	courses that are provided centrally.
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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>The provision of free school transport ensures that learners can access mainstream, Welsh medium or faith schools if they are more than 1.5 or 2 miles away from their homes. ALN transport is provided based on their individual assessments and needs.</p> <p>The adoption of Welsh Government's Transport hierarchy and the promotion of public bus services will ensure that resources are maximized for the benefit of all community members.</p> <p>Learners can access free home to school transport to either their nearest suitable or catchment if they are different.</p>	<p>The reduced distance eligibility requirements have increased access to school transport and the inclusion of medical reasons in the policy will prevent learners being disadvantaged due to their or their parents' medical circumstances.</p> <p>School transport requires a local supply chain to operate home to school contracts. An in-house passenger transport service has been created to respond to market failure that provides roles for drivers, passenger assistants and supervisory staff.</p> <p>We will continue to evaluate the opportunity to change existing bus timetables or increase public bus provision to allow more learners to travel on public bus services.</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?
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p>	<p>Free school transport reduces the number of motor cars that need to undertake the school run thereby helping to reduce the county's carbon footprint.</p> <p>Additional available walking routes are being created to reduce the requirement to transport learners who do not meet the distance eligibility criteria. This will improve the active travel network for all community members.</p> <p>The Commissioning Unit is working with the Transport team to maximise the opportunities to use public bus services, thereby reducing vehicle movements and the resulting carbon emissions.</p> <p>Learners can access free transport to either their nearest suitable or catchment schools, if they are different, which can reduce mileage, journey times and carbon emissions. Feeder status is not considered when assessing nearest suitable school, which may negatively impact some communities where their primary school is identified as a feeder school for an out of county comprehensive which is neither their nearest suitable nor catchment school.</p>	<p>The Council has started its fleet transition and currently has four electric buses.</p> <p>Routes are continually assessed to identify opportunities to combine routes and reduce the number of vehicles. Available walking routes are also continually reviewed where transport has been provided as a route has been deemed unavailable and the walking distance is below the eligible thresholds. Capital funding has been made available to increase the number of available walking routes to reduce the requirement for transport.</p> <p>We are actively seeking to reduce the number of home to school transport vehicles by increasing the opportunities to award bus passes for public bus services.</p> <p>The Council exceeds its statutory LTM obligations and provides free transport to either nearest suitable or catchment if they are different, faith and Welsh medium schools. All Monmouthshire learners have access to a Monmouthshire catchment school.</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?
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Where primary aged learners live within 1.5 miles of their school and secondary 2 miles of the school they are encouraged to use active travel to get to school. Additional walking routes are being created to reduce the number of pupils being transported as a walking route is not currently available.</p> <p>The policy proposes the adoption of Welsh Governments transport hierarchy which prioritises active travel. Feeder school status is not an eligibility criteria when assessing access to free school transport, which may impact on the mental health of students who attend a school which is different from their community peer group, if they wish to access free transport. There is no guarantee that siblings will have access to free transport to the same school as circumstances may have changed in the intervening period e.g., catchment reviews. This may result in negative mental health impacts for learners and create additional financial burdens for families.</p>	<p>We are working with Highways colleagues on the creation of additional walking routes and capital funding has been made available to deliver new infrastructure.</p> <p>We will not withdraw transport to existing transport users as a result of policy changes. Any agreed policy changes are published in October in advance of school application processes so that parents are clear on their entitlement to free transport before applying for school places.</p> <p>By enabling parents to access free home to transport for nearest suitable or catchment if they are different, it provides the opportunity for parents to have a choice of schools and potentially reduce journey times if the nearest school (which could be out of county) is selected.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>School transport provides access to learners to attend their nearest suitable or catchment</p>	<p>Maintaining and where possible improving the existing public bus infrastructure is a key priority given the forthcoming changes to the current</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?
	<p>schools thereby developing friendships and support networks.</p> <p>School transport does not consider feeder school status which may be different from the catchment or nearest suitable schools which may negatively impact on those learners who will not receive transport to their preferred school.</p>	<p>funding model. Transferring secondary aged learners to public buses will generate additional fare income and potentially reduce the costs of home to school transport.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>The procurement of external operators is undertaken through a collaborative procurement system with neighbouring authorities and contractual terms and conditions are aligned. We have developed or own in house transport provision to respond to market failure so that resources can be provided locally.</p>	<p>We are undertaking improvements to the active travel infrastructure and exploring opportunities to maintain or enhance the public bus network within Monmouthshire</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Free home to school transport is provided for statutory aged learners who wish to attend their nearest suitable or catchment Welsh medium school.</p>	<p>All Welsh medium Post 16 learners attending their nearest suitable or catchment school will have access to concessionary travel.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Free home to school transport is accessible to all learners who meet the eligibility criteria. In addition, discretionary travel is proposed for specific sets of learners to ensure</p>	<p>Improvements to public bus timetables and networks will enable learners who do not meet the eligibility criteria to access public transport.</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?
	that they can safely access their nearest suitable or catchment schools.	

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritized 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>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p>School transport changes on an annual basis as new learners start their education journey or move into the area and others leave the education setting. We work with the Access Unit to identify those learners that are eligible for transport and have contacted all parents of new school starters to advise if they are eligible for free transport.</p> <p>As the service requirements change annually, long term planning is difficult however we are seeking to mitigate this through the adoption of WG's transport hierarchy and the improvements to the walking infrastructure and public networks.</p>	<p>Routes are assessed when new learners apply for transport to determine if routes can be aggregated, or vehicle size is increased.</p> <p>The Councils Schools & Community transport service continually review their operational needs in order to respond to contractor hand backs, lack of tenders etc. The transition of the fleet will help offset our carbon footprint and plan for future legislative requirements for accessible and net zero school transport vehicles.</p> <p>The provision of annual Transport Policy provides a framework for how decisions will be made.</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>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>For school transport to be successful it needs to be delivered in partnership with operators, parents, schools and learners as well as other Council service areas. We also work with neighbouring authorities to procure operators on a standard contract, agree annual price uplifts and share learning.</p> <p>The Transport team is currently working with the Commissioning Unit and operators to identify opportunities to improve the public bus network for learners.</p>	<p>Feedback from the consultation process undertaken in June 2023 has been used to review and amend the proposed Transport Policy for 24-25</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The Council undertook a consultation process between 31st May and the 29th June. All parents/carers of existing units were contacted to make them aware of the consultation as were all schools. A press release was issued at the start of the process and there were regular social media updates reminding community members to respond.</p> <p>Responses from key stakeholders have been responded to and drafting changes have been undertaken.</p>	<p>The proposed Transport Policy has been amended to reflect the feedback.</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>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>Due to ongoing issues around lack of external bids or bids being excessive our internal provision has expanded to fill any potential service gaps. Whilst the majority of contracts are still undertaken through external operators the internal resource has increasingly had to step in to cover contract hand backs or operator failures.</p> <p>Increased use of the public bus network to transport learners will improve the viability of publicly accessible services.</p>	<p>When a new contract is taken on by the internal service, if this exceeds existing capacity we review existing routes and where possible release one back for external tender. This ensures that contracts are available for the external operators and mitigates the impact of additional contracts on the existing workforce. If no bids are received or they are higher than the internal cost of provision the contract is transferred to the internal team and capacity is adjusted accordingly.</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>The provision of home to school transport is an essential service underpinning learner's education journeys. The service is however resource intensive and reactive to the needs of the learners. The proposed policy provides a framework which ensures consistency in evaluating applications for transport, provides certainty for parents and learners and guidance on how discretionary transport will be awarded. The alignment of the policy to WG's transport hierarchy will benefit the wider community by increasing the viability of public service provision.</p>	<p>The consultation has enabled officers to reflect on the proposed policy and identify opportunities for improvement.</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	<p>All drivers, passenger assistants and operators are required to undertake safeguarding training.</p> <p>The policy sets out how school transport will be assessed and provided for looked after children, learners with special educational needs and mainstream learners.</p> <p>All learners, parents and operators are required to adhere to our Rule Book to ensure the safety for all those involved.</p> <p>All safeguarding concerns are subject to a Multi-Agency referral process and when required a full safeguarding review.</p>	<p>.Where safeguarding concerns cross the MARF threshold, drivers and or passenger assistants may be suspended from undertaking their duties/contracts. This can create a financial and emotional burden on the individuals concerned and the safeguarding investigation process can take a significant period to resolve.</p>	<p>External operators will have the option to have a member of the Commissioning Team appointed as a welfare point of contact to keep them informed (as much as they are able) on the progress of the investigation.</p> <p>MCC colleagues will follow internal policy and procedures.</p> <p>The paramount concern remains the safe transportation of our learners.</p>
Corporate Parenting	<p>The policy sets out the eligibility criteria for looked after children. The service works closely with Children's Services to provision specific transport needs as required.</p>		

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

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2008

Existing Transport Policy and Lessons Learnt

Existing transport contracts and engagement with individual learners and their parents

School transport appeals and requests for discretionary transport

A review of other LA Transport policies

The removal of BES grant funding for Bus Operators

Llwybr Newydd: the Wales transport strategy 2021

Public Consultation & the resulting feedback June 2023

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?

The form has highlighted the complexities of the provision of home to school transport including its substantial impact on resources, its impact on climate change and the need to continually evaluate the provision to respond to a changing social, economic and environmental back drop. The proposed consultation will enable us to consider the feedback against the legislative framework, resources constraints and the wants and wishes of service users. We will be able to articulate where we have been able to make changes to the policy as the result of the feedback and where we have been unable to change the policy the reason why.

It will also enable parents and learners the opportunity to plan for any changes from September 24.

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

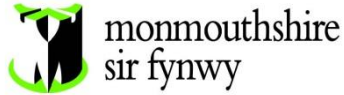
What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
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Report to be presented to Cabinet seeking approval to consult on the draft policy	3 rd May 2023	Head of Service
Undertake consultation on the draft policy	May – June 2023	Commissioning Team
People Scrutiny Committee	August 23	Head of Service
Review feedback, finalize draft and seek Member approval	September 23	Head of Service & Commissioning Manager
Publish Transport Policy 24-25	1 st October 22	Commissioning Manager

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.

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Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Cabinet approval to consult on proposed Transport Policy 23-24	27th July 2022	
2.	Cabinet Update	7 th September 2022	
3.	Cabinet decision to consult on proposed Transport Policy 24-25	May 2023	Updated to reflect proposed policy changes for 24-25
4.	Public Consultation	31 st May – 29 th June 2023	Draft document amended to reflect feedback
6	Cabinet approval of the revised policy	05 th September 2023	Amendments made to clarify the drafting in the policy regarding faith school criteria and safe walking routes following feedback during consultation



SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF STATUTORY OBJECTION PERIOD TO ESTABLISH A 3-11 SEEDLING WELSH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MONMOUTH

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 6th September 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with the outcome of the statutory objection period regarding the Authority's intention to establish a 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site.
- 1.2 This report presents the objection report to Cabinet and seeks their approval to proceed with the proposal.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 Members agree to establish a 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site with effect from 1st September 2024.
- 2.2 Officers take the necessary steps to establish a temporary governing body for the school in advance of September 2024.
- 2.3 Members agree that home to school transport will only be awarded in line with the home to school transport policy. Therefore, younger siblings of existing pupils currently attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will only receive free transport to the new school.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The School Organisation Code (2018) places responsibility on local authorities in Wales for ensuring that there are sufficient and suitable school places across the County to educate its children and young people.
- 3.2 The development of Welsh-medium education has been a central priority for Monmouthshire in all our WESPs, it is a main priority in the current plan and as a result, we have increased the number of places in both our Welsh-medium primary schools and established immersion provision. However, whilst these are important developments, we acknowledge that there is a lack of provision for Welsh medium primary education in the Monmouth area. Consequently, pupils living in Monmouth

travel a long distance each day to attend one of our Welsh medium primary schools and this is one of the main reasons parents' give as a reason for not choosing a Welsh medium education for their children.

- 3.3** The establishment of a Welsh medium primary school in Monmouth will ensure that more pupils can be taught through the medium of Welsh within their local area and in doing so, give parents the confidence to choose a Welsh medium education for their children. In addition, a third Welsh medium school within Monmouthshire, will place us in a strong position to meet our target of 120 reception learners by the end of the current WESP in 2031.
- 3.4** The Council has a responsibility under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when considering any significant school reorganisation proposals.
- 3.5** Following Cabinet approval, the statutory consultation process opened on 29th March 2023 for a period of 8 weeks, concluding on 15th May 2023. A consultation report was produced and published to all statutory consultees analysing the feedback received during the consultation period, and the Authority's response to this feedback. Setting out Estyn's view (as provided in its consultation response) of the overall merits of the proposal.
- 3.6** Following the consultation process it was agreed that further consideration would be given as to whether free home to school transport should be provided for younger siblings of existing pupils on roll at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.
- 3.7** Under the current home to school transport policy free home to school transport would not be provided where parental preference has been exercised and will only be provided to either the learners nearest suitable or catchment school. From September 2024 the catchment area for Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will change and for pupils residing in Monmouth and the surrounding area the catchment school will be the new school in Monmouth town.
- 3.8** Pupils currently receiving free home to school transport to existing provision who will be residing in the catchment area for the new school will not lose their entitlement to free home to school transport. Feedback from the consultation highlighted that families are concerned about their children attending two different schools. Although the Local Authority understand parent's concerns it is recommended that transport will be provided in line with the current policy to ensure that the new school establishes itself in its local community.
- 3.9** On the 7th June 2023, the consultation report was presented to Cabinet who agreed to proceed with the next stages of the statutory process, by means of publication of the statutory notices that proposed the establishment of a Welsh-medium seedling Primary School in Monmouth.

- 3.10** The Council opened the Statutory Objection Period through the publication of the Statutory Notices found under appendix 2 of this report. The Statutory Notices were published on the Council’s website, and copies placed at the entrance of Overmonnow Primary School. All consultees were directly informed of their publication.
- 3.11** The publication of the Statutory Notices opened the Statutory Objection Period (a period whereby consultees can submit statutory objections against the proposals). The Objection Period formally opened on 19th June 2023 and concluded on 17th July 2023 allowing for a 28 day objection period as per the requirements of the School Organisation Code (Wales) (2018).
- 3.12** In line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (Wales) (2018), the Council has produced an Objection Report that seeks to highlight any formal objections received during the Objection Period, and the Council’s response to these objections. The full Objection Report is included under appendix 3.
- 3.13** During the period of 19th June to 17th July 2023, one Statutory Objection was received, opposing the development of a 3-11 seedling Welsh-medium primary school. Full details of this Statutory Objection can be found below and on page 7 of the Objection Report, alongside the Council’s full response to the concerns raised.

Objection number	Objection concern
1.	<p>Further to your letter notifying our Council of the proposed establishment of a Welsh-medium Primary School in Monmouth, Wye Valley Community Council's Councillors discussed this proposal at their meeting yesterday.</p> <p>Councillors are aware of the elderly nature of the population in Monmouthshire and the very low numbers of new entrants to the existing schools at Llandogo & Kymin View. This is having an effect on the budgets and staffing of these schools and any new school would reduce the entries even further. Councillors also question what value the new School would have given that Welsh is already being taught as part of the curriculum in both existing schools and there is unlikely to be any interest from surrounding English families.</p> <p>Councillors therefore oppose the planned School.</p> <p>They would be grateful if you could take these views into consideration therefore when making a decision.</p>
Local Authority Response	
<p>The Council fully supports and is committed to the Welsh Government’s national strategy Cymraeg 2050 which aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050. The establishment of a third Welsh-medium primary school in Monmouthshire is a central element of our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to enable us to meet our targets. The location of the new school in the town of</p>	

Monmouth will encourage more parents to choose a Welsh medium education because it will reduce the need for learners to travel long distances to access Welsh medium education in Abergavenny. The Council believes it is important that all children have access to Welsh-medium education and are taught wherever possible within their local community.

As with any new school opening in Monmouthshire a new budget will be identified to support the revenue costs and this will not impact on the budgets of existing schools. All the capital funding will be funded via a grant from Welsh Government.

In a Welsh-medium primary school foundation phase pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh and at least 70% of the teaching in Key stage 2 is through the medium of Welsh. In an English-medium school foundation phase pupils are taught through the medium of English. English is the main medium of teaching key stage 2 but Welsh is taught as a second language.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.1 The School Organisation Code 2018 sets out the following requirement.

‘Following the consultation period, when the proposer is reviewing the proposal prior to publication the proposer is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal and each of the alternatives that were set out in the proposal paper. This involves the same matters that the proposer was required to assess in formulating the proposal:

- (a) the likely impact on quality and standards in education,*
- (b) the likely impact on the community and*
- (c) the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.*

The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.’

A further assessment of the alternative options that were considered in the consultation document was undertaken and considered by Cabinet on 7th June 2023, a reminder of this assessment is provided below:

4.2 Option 1 – Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean there would be no change to existing provision. Following the consultation period there were only a small number of respondents that felt there was not a need to establish Welsh-medium provision in Monmouth. This was largely due to their belief that there is insufficient demand in the area and that the other schools required further investment. The Council has considered the responses and maintains the view that there is a need to have a third Welsh-medium school in Monmouth which supports the targets in our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

4.3 Option 2 – Build a new Welsh medium Community Primary school on a new site in the Monmouth area to include early years and childcare provision. There were some respondents that felt a new school in the town would be more beneficial, however there are still no suitable building sites available in Monmouth. In addition, planning permission

may not be granted due to the lack of an identified strategic solution to the treatment of phosphates at the Monmouth Wastewater Treatment Works.

4.4 Option 3 – Utilise Osbaston CIW primary school site in Monmouth to create additional Welsh-medium primary provision and bilingual childcare. The Council maintains the view that this is not a viable option. The space on the site is limited, both internally and externally and may not be sufficient for two schools. The Osbaston Junior site has extremely limited parking space for staff, visitors, and home to school transport. The infrastructure around the school site is also inadequate and the limited parking within the school would result in traffic spilling onto the main road. Increasing the number of staff and pupils using this building would result in additional pressure being put on already insufficient space for pupils. There would be legalities to consider with regards to the ownership and there is a high risk of flooding on the site.

4.5 Option 4 – Utilise the former Raglan junior school building to create Welsh-medium primary provision and build a new Welsh medium early years and childcare provision on the site. Many of the respondents felt this was the best option due to the fact the school would have its own site which would support full immersion. They also felt Raglan was a more suitable location as it is central for all pupils within the catchment area.

The Council maintains the view that utilising the former Raglan Junior school is not the preferred option and strongly believes that the new school should be in the town where there is a higher population. The former Raglan Junior School site was also discounted as the ownership of the site is part of on-going discussions with Monmouth Diocesan Trust. The building is in a poor state of repair and beyond refurbishment. Early discussions with the Welsh Education Forum ruled this option out as the demand is within the town area and pupils would not be able to walk to school but would require transport.

4.6 Option 5 – Utilise existing accommodation available on the Overmonnow Primary School site to establish a seedling Welsh-medium primary school and early years and childcare provision. As mentioned above the Council maintains the view that this is the preferred option it is important that Welsh-medium provision is available in the town of Monmouth where more pupils can access Welsh-medium education within walking distance to their home.

4.7 On the 7th June 2023 Cabinet considered the assessment of options as detailed above and agreed to “publish the proposals as consulted on” and proceed to the next stage of the statutory process for the proposal to establish a 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site via a seedling model.

5. REASONS:

5.1 The proposal demonstrates our commitment to increasing the number of children accessing Welsh medium provision and meets our targets outlined in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It also supports the Welsh Government’s national strategy Cymraeg 2050.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The initial costs for the Welsh medium primary school are shown below. The funding formula for a small school of under 50 pupils requires the headteacher to teach for 50% and have management time of 50% therefore the costs reflect a full time headteacher , 50% teacher and full time higher level teaching assistant. The costs are for the full year, in the first year of opening the salary costs will be reduced to 7 months to reflect the financial year.

Headteacher	£74,275	One full time teaching headteacher
Teacher	£30,707	50% UPS3 teacher
Resources	£5,000	
Administration	£5,000	

- 6.2 Overmonnow Primary School is currently fully funded for utilities, maintenance and grounds therefore no additional costs are expected.

- 6.3 The transport costs are expected to be neutral; it is anticipated that any additional costs will be offset by savings of transporting pupils to other Welsh medium primary schools. However, if a decision is taken to provide discretionary transport to younger siblings of existing pupils there may be an additional cost. At present the costs for this are not available because we do not hold the data and are not aware of parent's preference.

- 6.4 As the school increases in size for every second class, for pupil numbers 1-15 a full time teacher will be required, for pupil numbers 16-30 a teaching assistant will also be required. Again these are shown as full year costs.

Teacher	£61,414	One full time teacher UPS3 teacher for foundation phase
Teaching Assistant	£24,613	For pupil numbers in excess of 15
Resources	£2,000	

Once the pupil numbers exceed 50 in total the teaching commitment reduces to one day a week for the headteacher and once they reach 100 pupils the headteacher has no teaching commitment.

- 6.5 To set up the Welsh medium primary school the capital costs will be £3,600,000. This includes refurbishment of 3 classrooms, early years, and backlog maintenance, this will be funded via a grant from Welsh Government.

7. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

Please see appendix 1 below.

8. CONSULTEES:

CYP DMT
SLT
Executive Member for Education
Cabinet

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

School Organisation Code (2018)
Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
Consultation feedback
Consultation report

10. AUTHOR:

Will McLean
Chief Officer, Children and Young People

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 07834435934
E-mail: willmclean@monmouthshire.gov.uk



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Integrated Impact Assessment document

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

<p>Name of the Officer Will Mclean</p> <p>Phone no:</p> <p>E-mail: willmclean@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Name of Service area: CYP Access Unit</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To establish a Welsh Medium 3-11 seedling primary school in Monmouth.</p> <p>Date: August 2023</p>
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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 school will provide Welsh medium education for children aged 3-11 living in Monmouth. Currently pupils have to travel long distances to Abergavenny.	Welsh medium education for children aged 12-19 is not yet available in Monmouthshire	MCC in collaboration with neighbouring authorities in Southeast Wales are looking at potential options across the region
Disability	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact

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	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Marriage or civil partnership	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Pregnancy or maternity	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Race	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Religion or Belief	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Sex	The provision will be co-educational including boys and girls.	No Impact	No Impact
Sexual Orientation	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact

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?
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<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>Establishing a new Welsh medium primary school will increase the number of Welsh speakers in Monmouthshire. Being bilingual has many advantages, for example, due to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 the ability to speak Welsh is either an essential or desirable skill for a growing number of jobs such as health, education, leisure, childcare and retail. This is especially the case in the provision of public services where the Welsh Language Standards require local authorities, fire and rescue service and police etc to provide their services to the same standards in both Welsh and English. The expansion of Welsh medium education across Monmouthshire means that more learners will have the opportunity to become bilingual thereby giving them a real advantage in securing employment opportunities</p>	<p>Time, distance and cost of travel has been identified as a challenge for some learners, particularly those suffering from socio economic disadvantage. As a result, Welsh medium education is not a genuine option for some learners. Learners who did not start Welsh medium education in Nursery or Reception have been unable to join in later years.</p> <p>Following feedback from the consultation, the Council recognises that families who already have older siblings attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni may want both children to attend the same school and receive home to school transport for all children.</p>	<p>The Local Authority plan to review the School Transport Policy to ensure that it provides learners with a genuine opportunity to have a Welsh medium education. The additional primary school in Monmouth and the development looking at secondary provision in partnership with Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Powys will create potential. This will allow more choice to parents wishing to provide Welsh medium education to their children. The development of an Immersion provision within Monmouthshire means that all learners, irrespective of age or linguistic background, will be able to benefit from a Welsh medium education.</p> <p>This is something that the Council will consider further as part of the consultation process.</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

<p>How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:</p>	<p>Describe the positive impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>Describe the negative impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts</p>
<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>	<p>Should the proposal be agreed it will have a positive impact on the Welsh Language as we will be creating a Welsh Medium primary school in Monmouth. This will enable families to access Welsh medium education closer to their home. They will also have access to Welsh medium nursery and childcare. The proposal will significantly promote the Welsh language offer in Monmouth, this links directly with the Council's ambition to support the Cymraeg 2050 strategy of 1 million Welsh speakers and also the targets set out in the Council's Welsh Language 5-year strategy 22-27 and also the targets set in the Councils Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 22-32.</p>	<p>There is a risk that due to the school being on the same site as an English medium school that pupils will not be fully immersed in the Welsh Language.</p> <p>There is currently no Welsh medium secondary provision in Monmouthshire so there will still be long travelling times to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen.</p>	<p>The headteachers of both schools will work collaboratively to ensure access to shared areas are managed effectively.</p> <p>MCC will continue to develop its discussions and engagement with Powys County Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to secure new Welsh medium secondary provision in the north of Gwent / south Powys area to mitigate the potential negative impact of this proposal.</p> <p>The council's Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) will be kept closely informed and involved in discussions on this.</p> <p>The Council will continue its on-going dialogue with Torfaen County Borough Council regarding the</p>

			provision at Ysgol Gyfyn Gwynllyw so that Welsh medium secondary education at the school remains an attractive option for pupils who wish to receive a wholly immersive Welsh education experience.
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	The establishment of a new school will generate the need for a greater number of Welsh Medium teachers and support staff in the Monmouth area over time. This will create opportunities for Welsh speakers in Monmouthshire and outside of the area to be able to utilise their Welsh language skills in the work environment. Recruitment Will be easier and can be gradually.	There is a risk that we may not be able to secure sufficient Welsh speaking teachers / staff to fulfil the requirements of the new school.	In order to mitigate this risk, we will actively engage closely with our colleagues in the Welsh Government, the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and the local higher education institutes to help facilitate greater numbers of Welsh Medium teachers. We will also use all available recruitment tools at our disposal to aid the recruitment process – social media (twitter, facebook, you tube), council website, bespoke Welsh Medium recruitment sites, LinkedIn etc. We will engage with our partners in the Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) to assist us in this process utilising their expertise and range of contacts
Service delivery	Should the consultation document be agreed it will be distributed to	There is a risk that we will not be able to recruit sufficient Welsh speaking specialist local	To mitigate this risk, we will actively engage closely with colleagues in the Welsh

Use of Welsh language in service delivery	stakeholders in both Welsh and English.	authority staff to deliver all services in Welsh.	Government, and the local higher education institutes to help facilitate greater numbers of Welsh Medium staff. We will also use all available recruitment tools at our disposal to aid the recruitment process – social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube), council website, bespoke Welsh Medium recruitment sites, LinkedIn etc. We will engage with our partners in the Welsh Medium Education Forum (WEF) to assist us in this process utilizing their expertise and range of contacts
Promoting use of the language	All correspondence and communications including on social media in relation to this proposal will be bilingual as required by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011		

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	The ability to speak Welsh is either an essential or desirable skill for a growing number of jobs such as health, education, leisure, childcare, retail, and public services. This means that more learners will have increased employment opportunities as a result of being Bilingual in Welsh and English. There will be Increased	No impact




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?
	employment opportunities within the proposed new school	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	The establishment of the new school will reduce the requirement to transport children from the Monmouth area to Welsh medium provision in Abergavenny.	No impact
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	This proposal would result in more children being able to access Welsh medium provision in their community and be able to walk to school rather than being transported.	No impact
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Parents seeking Welsh medium education for their children in the Monmouth area will be able to access provision within their community. This will increase the opportunities for more learners to use the Welsh language outside of school in social settings and a range of authentic contexts.	No impact
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	No impact	No impact
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	If the proposal is agreed The Welsh Government's strategy of One Million Welsh Speakers will be	No impact


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?
Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	supported by the increase in the number of pupils being educated through the medium of Welsh.	
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The expansion of Welsh medium education in Monmouth means that more learners will have the opportunity to become bilingual in both English and Welsh and increase their chances of securing employment as adults and fulfilling their potential.	No impact

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99. 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>	If learners wish to receive their education through the medium of Welsh and they are able to attend a Welsh medium primary school in their local community or within a short traveling time, they are likely to choose and continue their education through the medium of Welsh.	No impact

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>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>This proposal is supported by our Welsh in Education Forum (WEF), the forum is represented by a number of key partners who are consulted with and are crucial in the delivery of our WESP targets.</p>	<p>No impact</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The new school is to serve the entire Monmouth cluster and all those affected by the proposal will be consulted with as part of the statutory consultation process. In addition, the WEF members have been actively engaged on the proposal.</p>	<p>No impact</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Currently families wanting to access Welsh medium Education in Monmouth have to travel to Abergavenny, this may be suppressing demand and resulting in parents not choosing Welsh medium education. Having a local Welsh medium school will resolve this issue and also stimulate demand.</p>	<p>No impact</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>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>.Having Welsh medium provision available in the local community will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils who are currently having to access provision in Abergavenny. Because of the reliance on school transport this may mean that pupils cannot access after school clubs and other activities that are available after school.</p>	<p>No impact</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	Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures will be in place at the new school	No impact	No impact
Corporate Parenting	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

- Faithful and Gould condition and suitability survey including identified backlog maintenance requirements (the Proposal document cites local backlog maintenance measures)
 - Data supplied by Health on the number of “live births” within the County.
 - Data from Planning on number of Housing Developments planned for the immediate coming years.
 - Current numbers on school rolls and trend analysis.
 - Surplus places – data from MCC Access team
 - Planning of school places data – MCC Access team

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?

The main benefits of the proposal is by creating Welsh medium provision in Monmouth we are enabling the local community to access education through the medium of Welsh without having to travel long distances to Abergavenny. This will in turn increase the amount of

Welsh medium places across Monmouthshire and meeting our targets within our WESP. We will also be contributing to the Welsh Governments strategy of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.

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

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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
1.0	Cabinet	18/01/2023	No amendments made.
2.0	Cabinet		

07/06/2023

No amendments made.

3.0

Cabinet

06/09/2023

Appendix 2

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COUNTY HALL, RHADYR, USK, MONMOUTHSHIRE NP15 1GA

SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ORGANISATION (WALES) ACT 2013

NOTICE IS GIVEN in accordance with Section 41 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 that Monmouthshire County Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to establish a new Welsh Medium School to be maintained by Monmouthshire County Council at Rockfield Road, Overmonnow, Monmouth, NP25 5BA for pupils aged 3-11.

Monmouthshire County Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and Estyn's full response has been published to all statutory consultees and is available via School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire.

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1st September 2024.

The proposed new school will be a community school and Monmouthshire County Council will be the admission authority. Applications for places at the new school will be managed and determined in line with the Council's agreed School Admissions Policy.

The admission number for pupils aged 4-11 at the new school in the first year in which the proposals have been implemented is 30. The new school pupil capacity will be 60.

The new school will provide nursery provision to be maintained by Monmouthshire County Council which will provide 30 full time equivalent places.

It is the intention of the Council that transport shall be provided free of charge for pupils to their new school in accordance with the Council policy at that time. The

current policy is that pupils are eligible for free home to school transport if they meet the following criteria:

- a) They attend their nearest or catchment area Welsh medium school and
- b) They live more than one and a half miles from the school for primary or
- c) They live more than two miles from the school for secondary.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is to say by **17th July 2023**, any person may object to the proposals outlined within this notice.

Objections should be sent to the School & Student Access Unit, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA or email to strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Signed



Date: **19th June 2023**

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive
For Monmouthshire County Council

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This explanatory note does not form part of the notice but is offered by way of explanation)

The new Welsh Medium Primary School will be located on the Overmonnow Primary School site by utilising existing accommodation at the school to create two separate schools. The school will be established using a seedling growth model which means in the first year the school will have pupils in nursery, reception and potentially year 1, a year group will be added each academic year until the reception / Year 1 cohort reaches year 6.

Whilst the Admission Number is published at 30, current projections do not anticipate this number will be met in the short term.

It is also proposed that the new school would have a Local Authority maintained nursery providing early education places for 3 and 4 year olds. We would also establish a Welsh medium non-maintained Cylch Meithrin on the site of the school to provide wrap around childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, as well as Flying Start childcare for 2 year olds.

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OBJECTION REPORT

To establish a New Welsh-medium Primary School
in Monmouth

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1. Introduction

Monmouthshire County Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient and suitable school places for children within its County, and in doing so ensure that resources and facilities are efficiently utilised to deliver the education opportunities that our children deserve.

The Council has a responsibility under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when considering any significant school reorganisation proposals.

The Council recently engaged in a statutory consultation process relating to the establishment of a new Welsh-medium primary school in Monmouth.

The purpose of undertaking the statutory consultation was to seek the views of our community, key stakeholders and partners on the proposal.

On conclusion of the statutory consultation period, a consultation report was produced to inform interested parties of the outcome of the consultation undertaken and included the Council's response to comments and concerns raised during this consultation.

The consultation report was considered by the Council's Cabinet on 7th June 2023, who agreed to proceed to the next stage of the statutory process by means of the publication of statutory notices.

This Objection Report now represents the council's responsibilities in line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 to produce a report that summarises any statutory objections received together with the Council's response to these objections.

2. Distribution of the Consultation Report

The consultation report was published on the Monmouthshire County Council Website [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#).

The consultees and interested parties listed below were also directly informed of the publication of the consultation report.

- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools affected by the proposal.
- The governing body of any school affected by the proposal.
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal.
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal.
- Welsh Ministers
- Town and Community Councils in the Monmouth area
- Assembly Members representing the area served by the school.
- Members of Parliament representing the area served by the school.
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- GAVO
- Teaching trade unions
- Support Staff trade unions
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- ESTYN
- RHAG
- Mudiaid Meithrin
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Early Years & Childcare Partnership
- Welsh in Education Forum

The above consultees were directly informed of the decision to proceed with proposals through means of the publication of Statutory Notices, and informed of how they could submit Statutory Objections against proposals.

3. A reminder of our proposal

The Local Authority consulted on the proposal to establish a 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school via a seedling / growth model on the Overmonnow Primary School site from the 1st September 2024. This will be achieved by utilising existing accommodation at the school. There will also be a Local Authority nursery and childcare provision.

4. Background to the Consultation Arrangements

4.1 The consultation period

On 18th January 2023 the Council's Cabinet approved the proposals to commence statutory consultation thereby allowing the Council to engage with key stakeholders on establishing a new Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site.

In line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018, the Council produced a consultation document, published on 29th March 2023, which also represented the commencement of the statutory consultation period. The formal consultation period lasted 8 weeks (including 20 school days), concluding on 15th May 2023

The consultation document was distributed / links sent to all statutory consultees as listed on page 4 of this document. The consultation document was also published on the Council's website at [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#).

The Council raised awareness of the consultation through means of direct mailshots to all statutory consultees, including parents, staff, and governing bodies of schools affected by the proposal. A marketing campaign was also established, making use of the Council's social media networks throughout the consultation period to advertise the proposals and how consultees could contribute to this process.

Consultees were advised of the following opportunities to respond formally to the consultation proposals:

- Completing the online consultation questionnaire available via [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#)
- Emailing strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

4.2 The Consultation Report

The Council has a responsibility in line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to produce a report seeking to inform interested parties of the outcome to the consultation stage of the process by means of:

- Summarising each of the issues raised by consultees
- Responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal, or rejection to the concerns with supporting reasons
- Setting out Estyn's view (as provided in its consultation response) of the overall merits of the proposal.

The Council's Consultation Report relating to these proposals was published on 30th May 2023, and all Statutory consultees and interest parties were directly informed of its publication. The consultation report was also published on the Council's website at [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#).

On 7th June 2023, the Council's Cabinet considered the Consultation Report and agreed to proceed with the next stages of the statutory process, by means of publication of the statutory notices that proposed the establishment of a Welsh-medium Primary School in Monmouth.

5. Statutory Objection Period

5.1 Methodology

On 19th June 2023, the Council entered into the Statutory Objection period through the publication of the Statutory Notices, found under appendix 2 of this report.

The Statutory Notices were published through the following means:

- On the council website at [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#)
- On or near the main entrance of Overmonnow Primary School.
- By electronic distribution to all statutory consultees

Consultees and interested parties were advised that, should they wish to submit a statutory objection against the proposals to establish a new Welsh-medium Primary School, they must do so in writing or by email within the 28 day Statutory Objection period, which concluded on 17th July 2023.

Consultees and interested parties were reminded that concerns raised during the consultation stage of this process would not automatically be carried into the Objection Period and considered as a Statutory Objection unless advised to do so within the Statutory Objection Period.

5.2 Statutory Objections

The Statutory Objection period opened on Monday 19th June 2023 for a period of 28 days, concluding on Monday 17th July 2023. During this time, one statutory objection was received. Details of this statutory objection together with the Council's response can be found within the table below:

Objection number	Objection concern
1.	Further to your letter notifying our Council of the proposed establishment of a Welsh-medium Primary

	<p>School in Monmouth, Wye Valley Community Council's Councillors discussed this proposal at their meeting yesterday.</p> <p>Councillors are aware of the elderly nature of the population in Monmouthshire and the very low numbers of new entrants to the existing schools at Llandogo & Kymin View. This is having an effect on the budgets and staffing of these schools and any new school would reduce the entries even further. Councillors also question what value the new School would have given that Welsh is already being taught as part of the curriculum in both existing schools and there is unlikely to be any interest from surrounding English families.</p> <p>Councillors therefore oppose the planned School.</p> <p>They would be grateful if you could take these views into consideration therefore when making a decision.</p>
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Local Authority Response

The Council fully supports and is committed to the Welsh Government's national strategy Cymraeg 2050 which aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050. The establishment of a third Welsh-medium primary school in Monmouthshire is a central element of our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to enable us to meet our targets. The location of the new school in the town of Monmouth will encourage more parents to choose a Welsh medium education because it will reduce the need for learners to travel long distances to access Welsh medium education in Abergavenny. The Council believes it is important that all children have access to Welsh-medium education and are taught wherever possible within their local community.

As with any new school opening in Monmouthshire a new budget will be identified to support the revenue costs and this will not impact on the budgets of existing schools. All the capital funding will be funded via a grant from Welsh Government.

In a Welsh-medium primary school foundation phase pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh and at least 70% of the teaching in Key stage 2 is through the medium of Welsh. In an English-medium school foundation phase pupils are taught through the medium of English. English is the main medium of teaching key stage 2 but Welsh is taught as a second language.

Appendix 1 - List of Consultees to receive the Objection Report

- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools affected by the proposal.
- The governing body of any school affected by the proposal.
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal.
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal.
- Welsh Ministers
- Town and Community Councils in the Monmouth area
- Assembly Members representing the area served by the school.
- Members of Parliament representing the area served by the school.
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- GAVO
- Teaching trade unions
- Support Staff trade unions
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- ESTYN
- RHAG
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Early Years & Childcare Partnership
- Welsh in Education Forum

Appendix 2 - Statutory Notice

**MOMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY HALL, RHADYR, USK,
MONMOUTHSHIRE, NP15 1GA**

SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ORGANISATION (WALES) ACT 2013

NOTICE IS GIVEN in accordance with Section 41 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 that Monmouthshire County Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to establish a new Welsh Medium School to be maintained by Monmouthshire County Council at Rockfield Road, Overmonnow, Monmouth, NP25 5BA for pupils aged 3-11.

Monmouthshire County Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and Estyn's full response has been published to all statutory consultees and is available via [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#).

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1st September 2024.

The proposed new school will be a community school and Monmouthshire County Council will be the admission authority. Applications for places at the new school will be managed and determined in line with the Council's agreed School Admissions Policy.

The admission number for pupils aged 4-11 at the new school in the first year in which the proposals have been implemented is 30. The new school pupil capacity will be 60.

The new school will provide nursery provision to be maintained by Monmouthshire County Council which will provide 30 full time equivalent places.

It is the intention of the Council that transport shall be provided free of charge for pupils to their new school in accordance with the Council policy at that time. The current policy is that pupils are eligible for free home to school transport if they meet the following criteria:

- a) They attend their nearest or catchment area Welsh-medium school and
- b) They live more than one and a half miles from the school for primary or
- c) They live more than two miles from the school for secondary.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is to say by **17th July 2023**, any person may object to the proposals outlined within this notice.

Objections should be sent to the School & Student Access Unit, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA or email to strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk



Signed

Date: 19th June 2023

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive
For Monmouthshire County Council

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This explanatory note does not form part of the notice but is offered by way of explanation)

The new Welsh Medium Primary School will be located on the Overmonnow Primary School site by utilising existing accommodation at the school to create two separate schools. The school will be established using a seedling growth model which means in the first year the school will have pupils in nursery, reception and potentially year 1, a year group will be added each academic year until the reception / Year 1 cohort reaches year 6.

Whilst the Admission Number is published at 30, current projections do not anticipate this number will be met in the short term.

It is also proposed that the new school would have a Local Authority maintained nursery providing early education places for 3 and 4 year olds. We would also establish a Welsh medium non-maintained Cylch Meithrin on the site of the school to provide wrap around childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, as well as Flying Start childcare for 2 year olds.