

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HOUSING &amp; COMMUNITIES – PERFORMANCE 2018/19</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>ADULTS SELECT</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

**1. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is provide a summary overview of Housing & Communities performance for 2018/19. The report provides an opportunity to scrutinise the achievements of the service in the context of last years demand. The report also seeks to highlight challenges and to provide an opportunity for the Committee to identify potential areas or priorities for further improvement.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To consider Housing & Communities performance for 2018/19 and whether services are effectively addressing local needs and challenges in relation to the Well-Being priorities for Monmouthshire and the Council’s responsibilities.
- 2.2 To consider and comment on general proposals for 2019/20 and recommend any priorities for improvement.
- 2.3 To consider and agree the following specific priorities for 2019/20 for Housing & Communities:
- To review the approach to tackling Empty Homes, with aim of improving performance.
  - To apply the Council’s EVOLVE process to the Careline service to increase the client base and use of assistive technology, particularly in regards to Social Care
  - Continue to review procedures to further improve the turnaround of Disabled Facilities Grants.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 Housing & Communities has responsibility for the following broad housing functions: Homeless Prevention and Homelessness; Housing Support Gateway; Disabled Adaptations; Assistive Technology; Empty Homes and Affordable Housing. The following provides a headline overview of performance 2018/19:

Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2018/19	Target 2019/20
<b>Homeless Prevention &amp; Homelessness</b>					
No. of individual homeless related contacts	719	533	835	-	-
% of households threatened with homelessness, successfully prevented.	58%	61.02%	67%	65%	69%
B & B Placements	25	41	54	Not set	30
<b>Disabled Adaptations</b>					
No. of DFG referrals	137	170	149	-	-
No. of Children DFG’s referrals	Not collected	6	7	-	-

Average time to complete a Disabled Facilities Grant	360 days	193 days	191 days	180 days	180 days
Proportion of Disabled Adaptation Budget Spent	-	-	98.3% (Committed £931,837)  82.5% (Actual £782,341)	100%	100%
<b>Affordable Housing</b>					
% of funding spent/utilised	100% + £2,082,489	100% + £737,828	90%	100%	100%
No. of completions	87 units	94 units	111 units	36 + S106	83 units
<b>Careline</b>					
No. of clients	772	779	816	800	830
<b>Housing Support Gateway</b>					
Referrals	1378	1428	1525	-	-
Prevention Intervention Referrals		70	48	-	-
<b>Empty Homes</b>					
No. of empty homes brought back into use	4.98% (28)	3.47% (26)	1.76% (13)*	Not set	4%

*\*Estimate*

- 3.2 For further information see individual **Appendices** attached to this report.
- 3.3 Taking the Housing & Communities service as a whole, performance for 2018/19 is considered to have been good and that effective progress and improvement in key areas can be evidenced. The main challenge is considered to be avoiding the on-going need to use B & B.
- 3.4 Homeless Prevention & Homelessness.** The number of people/households approaching the Council for assistance continues to be challenging. Demand spiked in 2018/19. Demand generally continues to exceed the supply of provision, particularly due to the lack of social housing and the difficulties associated with access to private rented accommodation, but also the lack of temporary/emergency accommodation. Nevertheless, the % of households threatened with homelessness successfully prevented has improved to 67%. In addition, the % of households where homelessness has been relieved has also improved from 17/18.
- 3.5 The improved performance particularly relates to the additional resources targeted towards youth homelessness and the on-going development of the Monmouthshire Lettings Service, including financial incentives, the availability of which was enhanced through last years Welsh Government funding. Although difficult to measure actual impact, the alignment between homelessness and the Supporting People programme (now Housing Support Grant) is considered also to be relevant.
- 3.6 Although not in use as yet, a positive achievement through partnership working with Monmouthshire Housing Association is the acquisition of six units of additional shared family emergency accommodation, six units of single persons shared accommodation and 3 self-contained units, although the latter will be a temporary arrangement pending sale.
- 3.7 The use of Bed & Breakfast, however, has unfortunately increased. The need to continue to use B & B relates to the on-going shortage of permanent and temporary

accommodation but also due to the need to manage the risk of high need and complex cases (eg offenders, mental health) where appropriate accommodation isn't available, whilst also giving consideration to safeguarding. A priority for 19/20 is to continue to strengthen the Monmouthshire Letting Service but also service provision for complex cases, particularly young people.

3.8 A recently emerged risk is the need for the Council to establish its own rent system in respect of temporary accommodation. The Council currently shares Monmouthshire Housing's software but in relation to Monmouthshire Housing implementing an upgrade, for technical reasons the Council will not be able to continue with the arrangement. An alternative option is currently being investigated, but this will result in an un-planned cost.

3.9 **Disabled Adaptations.** The average time to complete Disabled Facilities Grants has reduced to 191 days. This is a notable achievement on the basis of the staffing levels available to deliver the service is only 1.2 wte.

3.10 Of relevance to the Committee is the level of on-going demand and the Council's positive decision to maintain the budget at £900,000. Demand continues to be high although broadly consistent with previous years. The Council's decision to maintain the budget at £900,000 has avoided the need for applications to be put on hold as has been necessary in previous years when the budget level was £600,000. The number of applicants assisted has increased:

	<b>DFG Approvals</b>	<b>DFG Completions</b>
• <b>2016/17</b>	63	49
• <b>2017/18</b>	91	85
• <b>2018/19</b>	117	100

3.11 It is considered that there may continue to be opportunities to improve DFG efficiencies. Procedures, therefore, will continue to be evaluated going forwards. One such procedure is the pass-porting of applicants who claim certain benefits (eg Personal Independence Payments) to reduce the need to means test. There may be opportunities to increase applicant contributions to get increased value from the budget. This, however, may impact on turnaround timescales and the Council may need to consider whether the focus should be on continuing to focus on turnaround (as per Welsh Government expectations) or seek to achieve better budget value for money.

3.12 The on-going attention to reviewing procedures and monitoring includes encouraging contractors to work more closely with the Council and more regular engagement with clients to provide closer support with the application process and agreeing provisional start dates and target completion dates with contract.

3.13 An outstanding action is the need to improve disabled adaptation information on the Council's website.

3.14 **Affordable Housing.** The number of affordable housing completions has increased from 94 units to 111.

3.15 Unfortunately and unlike previous years, it was not possible to fully utilise the Social Grant and Housing Finance Grant II funding available this year resulting in a £194,376 underspend. Nevertheless a 90% spend was achieved. This was due to a number of schemes unexpectedly dropping out of the programme due to extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, land availability issues are impacting on a reduction in alternative sites to bring forward. This position is unlikely to improve in the short-term due to the start of the Local Development Plan process. To mitigate against the schemes that dropped out of

the programme, it was, however, possible to support the buy-back of 17 ex-social housing properties.

- 3.16 **Careline** – The main priority for Careline is to expand the number of users. A target of 800 clients has been in place. It's also a priority to support Social Care priorities wherever possible. The target was successfully achieved during the year. Client numbers have continued to steadily rise to the end of year total of 816 clients. An on-going challenge is the average age of clients and the associated implications of high levels of clients leaving the service. Usually due to death or moving to alternative accommodation. In addition to supporting living safely and independently. Promoting and marketing the service, therefore, is a key activity.
- 3.17 It is considered that greater use of assistive technology could possibly bring additional benefits to the Council, particularly Social Care. Opportunities also exist with Health. It is believed that on a cost-benefit basis, assistive technology could potentially provide Social Care and Health with opportunities that, for example, could help manage staff capacity and could increase care options for practitioners and clients. One of the benefits of which could include cost avoidance. The Council, therefore, has agreed to apply the Evolve process to the Careline service, which started recently.
- 3.18 At the end of 18/19, two partnership opportunities emerged. Through the Intermediate Care Fund, on behalf of Health and the Council has co-ordinated a regional assistive technology study to evaluate the benefits for those suffering from dementia. The Council received £25,000 of funding in this regard. Also, the Council has been approached by a neighbouring Council about the possibility of setting up a service level agreement for the Council to provide an installation and maintenance service.
- 3.19 Again the achievement of the team needs to be acknowledged because there are only 2 part-time members of dedicated staff totalling 1.6 wte, who are responsible for day to day enquiries, installing, maintaining and removing equipment, managing stock and arranging charging.
- 3.20 **Housing Support Gateway** – The role of the Gateway is largely to provide a single point of contact for housing support services. The Gateway determine need, maintain the waiting list and allocate cases to providers. In this regard, the Gateway last year successfully absorbed the additional demand relating to being the single point of contact for a further four services. The Gateway dealt with 1525 referrals, which was an increase in referrals from last year.
- 3.21 The Gateway is also a direct provider of support. Supporting People Commissioning continued to invest in the Gateway and attracted additional funding to provide a dedicated Universal Credit Support Worker to mitigate against the increasing number of residents moving on to Universal Credit. The service directly supported In addition, funding was provided to enable the Gateway to work in partnership with Llamau to pilot a project to establish a Supported Lodgings service to expand housing options in Monmouthshire, particularly for young homeless people. This is proving to be more challenging than expected and at year end, despite several expressions of interest, no host landlords had been signed up, although the pilot is still in its infancy. Work is currently progressing with signing up one potential host, with whom a potential match has been identified.
- 3.22 **Empty Homes** – The 2018/19 outturn, subject to final verification, of Empty Homes being brought back into use was 2.5% (17 properties) and a reduction from 2017/18.
- 3.23 The current approach to dealing with Empty Homes focuses on a bi-annual mail out to owners of empty homes together with following up one-off issues/opportunities. The mail-

out is an attempt to positively engage with owners and a mechanism to offer advice and assistance about the options available to owners. The Council currently doesn't take any enforcement action.

- 3.24 A flats above shops in Abergavenny survey in February 2019 was undertaken to help understand the position in Abergavenny town centre and identify potential opportunities. This survey needs to be collated and shared to inform discussions.
- 3.25 For 19/20, it is proposed to review the current procedure/approach to empty homes. This will consider:
- Enforcement opportunities
  - More regular engagement with owners
  - More targeting
  - Incremental/escalated correspondence with owners where owners fail to respond to contact about their properties being empty.
  - Understand the nature and extent of empty flats above shops in Abergavenny.
- 3.26 A short-term priority is to establish an up to date profile of the current position to inform discussions

#### **The Benefits & Impact of Housing & Community Interventions**

- 3.27 The benefits and impacts of interventions is reflected in the case studies detailed in **Appendix 2.**

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

- 4.1 There are no negative implications in regards to Equalities and Future Generations requirements and will contribute positively to protected groups. All services contribute positively to Social Justice, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting, particularly the Homeless and Housing Support services supports both safeguarding and corporate parenting.

#### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Not applicable to this report.

#### **6. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Not applicable

#### **7. REASONS:**

- 7.1 All of the Council's Housing Services contribute to the Monmouthshire Well-Being Plan.
- 7.2 The Council has a legal duty in to:
- Prevent and respond to homelessness under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the power to discharge duties into the private rented sector.
  - Provide Disabled Facilities Grants under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
  - The Housing Support Gateway contributes to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Social Services & Well-Being Act 2014

Welsh Government expect Housing Support activity to contribute to Homeless Prevention

7.3 The Careline Service currently provides the Council with an income and it is considered that increased use of assistive technology by Social Care and Health could potentially contribute to meeting local priorities.

7.4 Housing activity can support Social Care priorities and will contribute to the Monmouthshire Well-being priorities.

**8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

8.1 There are no budget implications with this report. The Housing & Communities budget outturn was an underspend for 2018/19. The main reason for the under-spend was due to a one off Welsh Government payment of £228,000 to mitigate against the loss of the temporary accommodation management fee from April 2017.

**9. CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet Member for Social Justice & Community Development; Enterprise Departmental Management Team; Housing Management Team

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

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## Appendix 1

### Homeless Prevention & Homelessness

#### Introduction

Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Council has a duty to both respond to homelessness and to prevent homelessness. The Act also provides the power to discharge the associated duties into the private rented sector. Strengthening prevention activity is an on-going priority, including engaging with private landlords to enable access to private accommodation as a key option for the Council to discharge its homeless duties and minimise over reliance on social housing and the need to utilise bed & breakfast.

The main causes of homelessness have remained consistent over recent years:

- Loss of private rented accommodation
- Rent or mortgage arrears
- Parents/family friends no longer willing to accommodate
- Relationship breakdowns

#### Headline Performance

The Housing Options Team received 835 contacts for 18/19 from clients seeking housing advice regarding the threat of homelessness, a spike in demand from 17/18.

- Successful S66 (threatened with homelessness within 56 days) case prevention work has **increased/improved**. Of the cases where prevention was successful, there has been an increase from 61% (17/18), to 67% successful prevention cases for 18/19.
- Successful S73 (actually homeless) homeless relief case-work is **increased/improved**. Of the cases where homelessness was relieved, there has been an increase from 50% (17/18) to 64% for 18/19.
- B & B Placements has **increased** – 54
  - No. of Family Placements - 17
  - No. of 16/17 year olds placed – 4
- Monmouthshire Lettings Service
  - Managed properties has **increased** - 23

Although prevention is improving there continue to be occasions when B & B has needed to be used. Either because of move on accommodation not being ready, a perceived risk complex clients present to any other sort of accommodation offer being suitable, or an urgent placement being needed. B & B placements have unfortunately increased. The number of complex clients (eg offenders; young people; applicants suffering from mental health issues) and the lack of suitable accommodation presents a significant challenge for staff due to the lack of available options, particularly in emergency situations.

Key barriers to preventing homeless are with Monmouthshire having a buoyant housing market. Therefore house prices, buying and renting, are extremely high. The Local Housing Allowance is £593.36 for a 3 bed property but the average rental for a 3 bed house is £737, a difference of £144. Lack of social housing stock and the introduction of Universal Credit from June has also impacted on single under 35 and families with up to 2 children in receipt of benefits but larger families, 3 or more children, are exempt at the moment.

The following is the accommodation resource available to the Council for homelessness:

- MCC Family Hostel, Monmouth - 5 units of emergency family accommodation
- MCC Single persons Shared Housing, Countywide – 57 units
- MCC Low Cost Home-Ownership Property – 1 unit of family accommodation
- Solas Young Persons Accommodation, Abergavenny & Chepstow – 21 units of accommodation for 16-24 year olds
- MCC Monmouthshire Lettings Service - 23 managed properties, an increase of 15 from the end of 17/18
- MCC Private Leasing Scheme – 44 units of family accommodation

Whilst the Housing Options Team are meeting targets with regard to preventing homeless and increasing stock for this use, there still remains a few reoccurring obstacles which are:

- Reluctance by Landlords to accept a paper bond via the Bond Scheme
- Reluctance by Landlords to accept clients labelled as 'homeless' and in receipt of benefits
- Lack of social housing
- Managing expectation of clients with regard to only wanting social housing in a certain area
- Lack of joint working/planning with agencies re planned moves.
- More clients presenting with medical/welfare/mental health needs
- Reduction in 'transitional funding' from Welsh Government has stopped although was paid yearly since the introduction of the new Act and is likely to. This funding has enabled us to employ temporary staff to support prevention, purchase a new data base, upgrade Cinderhill family hostel (Monmouth), develop and promote Monmouthshire Letting Scheme, pay cash bonds to landlords to assist into private renting.

### **Headline Priorities 2019/20**

To overcome these obstacles, the team are committed to the following priorities for 19/20:

- Continue to develop the Monmouthshire Letting Service
- Establish a Positive Pathway model to mitigate against youth homelessness.
- A pilot 'Lodgings based' supported housing models is being implemented through the Housing Support Grant programme.
- MHA have purchased a property in the South of the County on our behalf, which will be used as shared family emergency accommodation. This will help reduce the need to use B & B which is usually out of county. It will also help to improve the standard of the Councils temporary accommodation in terms of location (helping to reduce the number of families displaced from the south) and the actual standard of the accommodation. A 'change of use' planning application is currently pending. Subject to planning approval, the accommodation will then need to be set up.
- MHA have purchased a property in Chepstow that will be used for single person (houseshare) accommodation, 5 rooms. Planning permission has been approved. A lease agreement is in



the process of being agreed with MHA. In addition three other units of one bedroomed accommodation are due to come available, pending sale.

- The monitoring of the Housing Register is an on-going priority to ensure the Register works for the Council in respect of homelessness and prevention. A review of the Allocation Policy has just started.
- A pending purchase of a joint data base in respect of Supporting People projects will enable more joint working and strengthen the relationship between the Housing Options Team and individual support providers. The new IT will also facilitate business efficiencies eg reduce multiple data entry and the need to email
- It is proposed to establish a Rough Sleeper working group to plan for winter 2019. This hopefully will include continuing to work with a group of Churches who are interested in providing overnight accommodation for rough sleepers over the winter months.
- There is a need to purchase a rent system for temporary accommodation. The Council is currently sharing Monmouthshire Housing's system. MHA are currently upgrading and for technical reasons the Council will not be able to continue sharing their system.
- Identify B & B establishments in Monmouthshire

## Disabled Adaptations

### Introduction

Disabled adaptations are delivered by the Strategy & Sustainable Living Team. The budget for 2018/19 was £900,000.

The provision of a Disabled Facilities Grant allows residents to remain living within their own property following an adaptation. Adaptations this year have varied between the provision of stair lifts, level access bathing facilities and complex extensions that may have also required external or through floor lifts. Customer satisfaction levels are very high and the grant applicants regularly report that these adaptations allow them to remain living at home where they may have had to consider a move to residential care. Family members also report that accessing DFG provision supports the people that they care for to be safer and it also ensures a greater level of autonomy and independence.

The Council also provides minor adaptations through the Safety at Home programme, which is delivered on behalf of the Council by Care & Repair.

### Headline Performance

The following provides an overview for 18/19.

Activity	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
DFG Referrals	137	170	149
Childrens DFG Referrals	N/A	6	7
No. of approvals	63	91	117
No. of completions	49	85	100
Average time to complete a DFG (Target 180 days)	360 days	193 days	191 days
• Average time to complete a childrens DFG	310 days	258 days	284 days
No. of Safety at Home minor adaptations	466	516	466

### Conclusions/Narrative/Analysis

The team continues to develop and a priority has been to build on existing relationships with contractors. This provides the best level of service for the grant applicant and a process undertaken throughout 18/19 has ensured that the majority of contractors have personally attended a Monmouthshire CC Safeguarding training session and all that complete work are DBS checked.

Additional Welsh Government ENABLE funding has allowed for innovative works that include automatic door entry systems.

Care & Repair continue to work in partnership with the team for those applicants that request advocate involvement and both teams are looking to align procedures and share knowledge/best practices. The total average DFG time to deliver a grant was 191 days in 18/19 and considering ways to maintain and reduce this where possible are continually reviewed.

The team have excellent working relationships with referring Occupational Therapists and there is a Senior Occupational Therapist that acts a point of reference for both Care & Repair and the team in Housing, which seeks to ensure any delays are kept to minimum. The team comprises of 1.2 fte which can prove challenging and can potentially have implications in managing the on-going demand and in the event of possible sickness.

## **Headline priorities for 19/20**

The following are the priorities for 19/20

- Improve the availability of information on the Council's website
- Continue to work with partners in Care and Repair to ensure there is a parity in all DFG provision and economies of scale are felt across both services
- Revisit existing procurement framework for contractors
- Increase engagement and support for applicants
- Continue to recruit new contractors to ensure both sustainability the shortest timescale of grant delivery that is safely possible
- Review procedures regarding means testing and pass-porting process

## Affordable Housing

### Key Issues:

The average house price in Monmouthshire is currently £301,901 (Wales comparison £185,529) and the lower quartile affordability ratio is 9:1. Therefore, the provision of affordable housing is one of the Council's more pressing concerns, in both urban and rural areas.

The number of applicants on the Common Housing Register is currently 3029.

During 2018/19 the Housing Options Team received 835 enquiries from households threatened with homelessness. They determined 307 S66 (at risk of becoming homeless within 58 days) and 244 S73 and S75 (actually homeless).

### Social Housing Grant Programme 2018/2019

1. The Social Housing Grant allocation for Monmouthshire for 2018/2019 was:

• SHG Only	£4,369,317
• Housing Finance Grant 2	£1,037,615
• Total	£5,406,932

The final figure drawn down from the Welsh Assembly Government was £5,212,623.

2. This has been a difficult year with some schemes dropping out of the programme. This resulted in an underspend of £194,376. In 2018-19 we delivered 112 affordable homes:

3.

- 84 new build homes
- 10 DIY Homebuy
- 17 Ex-council house buy back properties
- 1 Rent to Own

4. The Welsh Government made a significantly larger amount of funding available for 3 years to help deliver their target of 20,000 affordable homes. Monmouthshire benefited from this by receiving allocations of:

• 2018/2019	£5,406,932
• 2019/2020	£1,966,257
• 2020/2021	£1,684,333

2019/20 will see the end of Housing Finance Grant. This will result in social housing grant allocations dropping down to past levels.

Developer/RSL	Address		Number	Completion Date
S106 Taylor Wimpey/MHA	Wonastow Road	Monmouth	6	
S106 Barratt/MHA	Wonastow Road	Monmouth	32	
S106 Barratt/Melin	Land south of School Lane/Clos Telyn	Goytre	11	25 June 2018
S106 Brideoak/MHA (Moun-ton Court)	Shirenewton 60/40	Shirenewton	3	28 September 2018
S106 Barratt/Melin	Land south of School Lane/Clos Telyn	Goytre	3	01 October 2018
SHG/MHA (Rural Exception Site)	Forge Road (Clos Anghidi)	Tintern	3	18 February 2019
SHG/MHA	Clos Ger Y Nant (Brookside)	Caldicot	25	18 February 2019
<b>Melin DIY Homebuys SHG</b>	21 Company Drive	Llanfoist	1	06 July 2018
SHG	46 Firs Road	Caldicot	1	22 October 2018
SHG	33 Briardene	Llanfoist	1	26 October 2018
SHG	39 Lewis Way	Chepstow	1	31 October 2018
SHG	The Old Post Office	Llan-soy, Usk	1	12 November 2018
SHG	11 Princes Street	Abergavenny	1	07 December 2018
SHG	44 The Close	Portskewett	1	20 December 2018
SHG	4 Sunnybank	Abergavenny	1	20 December 2018
SHG	14 St Andrews Avenue, Bulwark	Chepstow	1	31 January 2019
SHG	20 Salisbury Walk	Magor	1	01 February 2019
<b>MHA Buy Backs</b>	6 St David's Road	Abergavenny	1	
	38 St David's Road	Abergavenny	1	
	11 Masefield Road	Caldicot	1	
	29 Newland Way	Monmouth	1	
	7 Hendre Close	Monmouth	1	
	79 St Andrews Crescent	Abergavenny	1	
	16 Grove Avenue	Llanfoist	1	
	7 Bulwark Road	Chepstow	1	
	59 Tudor Road	Monmouth	1	
HMO	30 Somerset Way	Chepstow	1	
	3 Heol Teifi	Caldicot	1	
	47 Thomas Hill Close	Llanfoist	1	
	30 Ffordd Sain Ffwyst	Llanfoist	1	
	36 Ffordd Sain Ffwyst	Llanfoist	1	
	22 Goldfinch Close	Caldicot	1	
	16 Chestnut Drive	Rogiet	1	
Shared Family Accommodation	62 Chepstow Road	Caldicot	1	
Melin-Rent to Own	8 Old School Mews	Portskewett	1	

## Careline

### Introduction

Careline provides assistive technology to enable residents of Monmouthshire to live safely and independently within their own homes. The base level of service is lifeline alarm provision with a small number of users in receipt of more complex equipment to monitor for bed absences, falls and epilepsy for example. The service has in the last year worked with a housing association to decommission a hardwired site and is in embryonic conversations with other Housing Associations regarding their future delivery plans.

The service continues to be financially sustainable and has come within budget in 2018/19. This was in part related to successfully acquiring Welsh Government Intermediate Care Funding that was derived from the completion by the manager of a regional Assistive Technology Feasibility Study. Monmouthshire Careline also successfully bid for regional ICF capital funding for provision of digital lifelines, additional telecare sensors and mobile technology.

Issues are currently around the existing policy and charging arrangements which will need to be considered further during 19/20. The current policy is based on a 'plug and play' model whereby equipment is easy and quick to install and easy to maintain. There is a need to ensure the service continues to be financially viable. A steady increase in clients will improve economies of scale, although there will be a point when an increase of clients will have staffing implications. Due to the average age of clients the number of clients leaving the service (due to death or moving home) continues to be a challenge.

The team is currently 2.1 fte and to ensure robust delivery and innovation to service delivery this may need to be considered further in relation to

In 2018/19 the service saw growth of 4.77% and has developed existing relationships with the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and in particular the Alzheimer's Society. The team have visited memory cafes and carers support groups both in Monmouthshire and across the ABUHB footprint to raise both awareness of the service and to take user feedback to shape future service provision.

### Service Activity

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
<b>No. of clients</b>	772	779	816
<b>Professional Referrals</b>	76	54	74
<b>No. of installations</b>	214	190	209
<b>No. of clients leaving</b>	213	183	168
<b>Level of Satisfaction</b>	94%	87%	96%
<b>% Who Feel Personal Safety Has Improved</b>	91%	85%	94%

### Conclusions/Narrative/Analysis

Although the number of new clients coming in to the service is high, a key issue for the service is the high average age of clients. Age related reasons for clients leaving the service is, therefore, an issue. Clients passing away or moving to alternative accommodation as not uncommon.

Key priorities for Careline is the transfer of analogue equipment provision to digital as this could significantly positively impact on the maintaining of equipment going forward. This transfer will need to be intelligently considered due to the provision of digital equipment not yet being fully

tested and there may be as yet unknown issues, small scale local testing will be necessary. There is also a cost implication as the roaming SIM Provision is only included in previous procurement for up to 15 months from use and this will need to be factored into to future financial planning.

Use of previous Intermediate Care Fund will allow a number of small projects to be delivered throughout 19/20 with initial discussions around mobile technology and the use of digital lifelines to expedite hospital discharge and prevent admission where appropriate.

### **Headline priorities for 19/20**

Further consider the charging regime for complex telecare sensors following a social care/health professional referral and one that supports and could be integrated into a package of care.

Continue partnership discussions with a neighbouring authority regarding a sub-regional installation and maintenance service for all new Telecare service users. Scope for transfer of their legacy Telecare users that are currently being monitored/maintained by another provider.

Engaging with a number of housing associations who are currently considering assistive technology provision/possible decommissioning with a view to establishing partnership arrangements.

Lastly it is considered that there may be scope to increase the use of assistive technology to support both Social Care and Health priorities. It is, therefore, a priority for the Council to apply the Evolve process to the service to clarify whether there are indeed benefits for Social Care to wider use of assistive technology. For example, to help manage staff capacity. This is being implemented through the MCC Evolve process.

# Gateway and Early Intervention/Prevention Housing Support

2018/19

## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of the MCC Housing Support Gateway.

## Background

The Housing Support Gateway team, in addition to the core role of management and processing of housing support referrals, assessments and allocations, have in recent years developed a Prevention Intervention role. The role, can and where appropriate (eg in matters of urgency, potential quick wins, and particularly complex cases) undertake direct support work.

It has been observed by staff that client issues have become more complex, often a combination of financial, family and health issues, and often those issues have reached a point of crisis. During 2018/19 a total of 70 clients received support from the Housing Support Gateway team.

## Accessing the Service

All referrals for Housing Support are accessed through the Housing Support Gateway. A Housing Support Assessment Officer (HSAO) will contact applicants, assess and identify support needs, manage the provider waitlist, followed by allocation to either a specialist or generic support service. Gateway Intervention is a further option for support.

Referrals are received by the Gateway from a range of referring agencies. A key referral source is via the Councils hubs and these referrals are specifically in relation to homelessness or the threat of homelessness. The expectation of Welsh Government is that housing support services support the Council to prevent and tackle homelessness.

Other referral sources include social services teams, registered social landlords, third sector agencies, family members and self referrals.

## Service Activity & Current Position

During 2018/19 the Gateway received **1525** referrals.

The team has successfully absorbed and managed the increase in referrals. The increase is in part associated with Supporting People Commissioning requiring the access arrangements for the dedicated Universal Credit Support Office; the Young Persons Accommodation Officer; Supported Lodgings and the Solas Young Persons Hostels to be through the Gateway.

- 2015/16 - 929
- 2016/17 - 1378
- 2017/18 – 1427

Therefore, the 3 year period since April 2016 has seen a 64% increases in demand for support. A number of the referrals are in relation to highly vulnerable and complex households.

During 2018/19, The Gateway allocated 1069 support packages to the various Gateway providers.

Gateway providers include Llamau, Pobl Group, Monmouthshire Mind, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Derwen, Housing & Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Services, Solas Hostels and MCC Young Persons Accommodation Officer. These services provide a range of generic and specialist services, including domestic abuse, mental health, learning disabilities and young people.



In order to manage increasing demand for support it is necessary to review practice. It is important that the Gateway can manage prompt responses especially where “crisis” issues have been identified.

A key development in 2019/20 was the recruitment of an Assessment Officer with a role dedicated to managing referrals specifically linked to the introduction of Universal Credit. The post holder was recruited in August 2018 undertaken direct support work with 42 clients.

### **Delivery of the Service**

Following initial contact with applicants an assessment is undertaken, either as a face to face interview or by telephone. In cases deemed as suitable to receive Intervention support there may be a need for prompt responses from Gateway staff, i.e. to contact other agencies, followed by meetings with the applicant, taking place either at the applicants’ home or at another suitable location.

The specific service remit is to prevent Homelessness. The issues that contribute to homelessness or the threat of homelessness are many and varied and in this context the service is providing the following main types of assistance:

- Assistance to manage benefit claims , debts and finances
- Liaison with agencies including landlords, Housing Options team, benefits agencies, social services, etc.
- Making charitable, benevolent applications and accessing Foodbanks
- Support to make housing applications, via Homesearch, including providing submitting additional welfare information to support claims.
- Assistance to find accommodation
- Emotional support /guidance.
- General and specialist Intervention/Advice & assistance.

### **Priorities for 2019/20**

- Introduction of a new service – Pobl, Family Intervention Project (FIP)
- Development and introduction of a new data base system, including the need to train all providers in its use. This needs to be in place by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 when the current database will cease to be supported.

## Empty Homes 2018/19

### Introduction

An Empty Home is defined as a property that has been empty for more than 6 months. The position in Monmouthshire is:

• 0-1 Year	303
• 1-2 Years	134
• 2-3 Years	61
• 3-4 Years	46
• 4+ Years	122
Total	666

### Headline Service Activity

- Total Number of Properties (including exempts): 738
  - Total number of properties brought back into use through Council input: 13\*
  - Percentage of properties brought back into use: 1.76%\*
- \*Subject to verification

The following work was undertaken during 2018/19:

- Empty property mail outs
- Web page information updated. This includes the facility for empty homes to be reported
- Introduction of Matchmaker Service.
- Spaces above Shops in Abergavenny – Survey

### Mail Outs

Two mail outs were conducted during September /October 2018 and February / March 2019. The purpose of the letter is to inform / advise owners of the options available to help bring their properties back into use.

Approximately 500 owners were contacted on each mail-out.

### Web-Site Improvements

A revamp of the empty property page to include information on the following:

- On keeping the empty property – The do's and don'ts 'on keeping the property safe and secure;
- On selling the property – information on the options available to owners and a link to our "matchmaker" service;
- On renting the property – information on the options available to owners, including the option to let via the Council's Monmouthshire Letting Service (MLS);
- On refurbishing the property – Advice and information around such issues as Planning Permission, Building Control and VAT;
- Loans – information on the loans available for property renovation;
- Useful Contacts. For detailed information, please go to <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/empty-property-advice/>

### Introduction of the Matchmaker Service

The scheme works by 'matching' empty homes for sale with buyers.

The Council holds two lists: one of potential buyers and one of owners interested in selling their empty property. There is information relating to the location, property type, and approximate purchase value. Interested buyers can sign up to the scheme and will be contacted when an empty property, matching their requirements, becomes part of the scheme.

This facility as yet hasn't facilitated any opportunities.

### **Spaces above Shops in Abergavenny – Survey**

During February and May 2019, a survey was undertaken in the Abergavenny town centre area to determine the status of the spaces above the shops. The survey involved a mixture of outside visual assessments and face-to-face interviews with those who operated a retail business out of the ground floor. It wasn't possible to complete survey the whole retail area so the survey will be extended shortly.

The survey collated the following result:

- Total Number of properties surveyed: 74
- Number of properties where the space above the shop appears to be / or is occupied: 48
- Number of properties where the space above the shop is not occupied: 26

What can be determined from the survey is that:

- The majority of those who run a business from the ground floor shops were not the owner of the building and therefore were not in a position to answer on behalf of the owner.
- Most of the upper floor space was in actual use as storeroom/stock room etc.
- One owner had made enquiries on converting some of the upper ground spaces into accommodation. However, the work required was extensive and expensive.

Key actions arising from the survey are:

- To make further enquiries in respect of the shops where the space appears not to be occupied.
- To engage with two known local property owners
- To engage with one known local agent

### **Priorities for 2019/20**

For 19/20, it is proposed to review the current procedure/approach to empty homes. Key actions proposed are:

- To review the current procedure for engaging with empty home owners
- Establish a profile of empty homes in respect of the current position
- Identify possible enforcement opportunities
- Introduce more regular engagement
- Undertake more targeting
- Introducing incremental/escalated correspondence with owners where owners fail to respond to contact about their properties being empty.
- To better understand the nature and extent of empty flats above shops in Abergavenny with a view to identifying potential opportunities.
- To provide an interim briefing report in respect of the empty flats above shops in Abergavenny to inform discussions



## Appendix 2

### Case Studies

#### Case Study – Careline

Social Care referred Mr G due to repeated falls at night, following suggestion from District Nurse that bed sensors would be beneficial. Mr G needs support with getting dressed/undressed, getting washed, preparing food and drink, remembering to eat/drink, getting clothing/bedding washed. J and S are living with Mr G and provide a lot of support. Mr G has 3 calls per day from a care agency.

Mr G has problems with mobility following a recent stroke, and has fallen out of bed on 2 occasions in the last few weeks. Due to series of strokes, Mr G lacks capacity and his daughter has power of attorney.

A and B would like a device to alert them instantly when Mr G is getting out of the bed so they are able to either get to him before he is at risk of falling or made aware that he is up and has fallen. There have been a few occasions when getting up in the morning, they have found Mr G on the floor sleeping with his quilt underneath him. Other risks identified are mats between rooms.

Standard mattress – with small bed rail with large cradle to supports which goes across the bed width. There are about 4 layers of sheets and protective sheets in the bed. G is incontinent.

A and B felt a pendant is not a good idea as Mr G wouldn't remember what it is for and may be likely to press it a lot. They would however like an alert in the day time, more so for when they go on holiday, so I have advised a Vibby wrist worn fall detector for day time use.

Following assessment it was determined that a Nemo PIR bed sensor would be most suitable. This is due to the design of the bed and how Mr G exits it. It was determined that an absence of 5 mins would be suitable as G takes significant time to move from the bed to the door due to a shuffling gait.

Mr G's equipment was installed in January 2019.

J reports in March 2019 that the equipment provided is working well and has avoided Mr G otherwise having been left on the floor at least once a month since installation as he is non-communitive and couldn't raise the alarm. J has advised that the equipment is crucial to supporting him to remain out of formal care and they feel the bed sensor allows them to provide support whilst also being able to sleep as they know the bed sensor will send the alarm.

#### Case Study - Housing Support Gateway & Prevention Intervention

Mr X is a client well known to the Gateway over the years. He has an addiction to drugs and various agencies have tried to support him over the years. However, due to his continuing use of drugs, his engagement has faltered and support gets closed down

Mr X came to our attention most recently when he was in psychiatric hospital recovering from his drug addiction. Mr X was homeless after being evicted from his tenancy and Gateway staff picked him up from psychiatric hospital and assisted him to access shared accommodation, provided by HOTS

Gateway staff also took Mr X to his former tenancy to collect his belongings. We assisted Mr X in helping him find and purchase a new TV set as this was extremely important for his mental health

Mr X was moved on to a Melin tenancy. However, due to ongoing issues with his drug use, this tenancy failed. Social Services became concerned about Mr X and referred him into the Gateway

to help him. Gateway staff tried to intervene to stop the eviction but could not get him to engage sufficiently to prevent him becoming homeless again.

Mr X then went into hospital for a while due to concerns regarding his mental health. He then spent some time in prison due to an assault. However, Mr X seemed to like being in secure accommodation as he felt comfortable and safe there as he can't seem to cope when left to look after himself

On release from prison, Gateway staff then worked with HOTS and managed to get Mr X a room in B & B. Gateway staff supported Mr X in setting up his benefits, paying his bills etc. and provided general welfare support to Mr X.

Unfortunately the B & B was only available for a fixed period. Gateway staff tried to persuade the owner of the B & B to make the arrangement with Mr X a long term booking, however, the owner was not agreeable to it. The stress of another impending eviction was playing heavily on the mind of Mr X and seriously affecting his mental health.

This then presented the Gateway with a problem in that Mr X would once again be homeless. He was still using drugs and Gateway staff decided to work with Social Services to see what other options were available for Mr X. However, given the past history of Mr X, hopes were not high for a successful outcome.

Through joint working and liaison with Social Services, supported accommodation was found for Mr X out of the County. This accommodation is a residential mental health service that specifically supports men with a diagnosed and enduring mental illness and can assist with other co-occurring symptoms such as substance misuse, personality disorder or other health issues.

Gateway staff helped in collecting Mr X's possessions from the B & B and ensuring that they were stored in the HOTS furniture storage. Mr X's belongings were then forwarded to Mr X at his new out of county supported accommodation.

Mr X is still at the supported accommodation where he is being treated for his addiction and mental illness caused by the addiction.

This has been a successful outcome. The odds were not favourable in respect of trying to provide and maintain permanent accommodation and it was only due to the intensive intervention support from Gateway staff that such a successful result was possible.

### **Childrens Disabled Facilities Grant**

A is sixteen and lives with parents. Older siblings visit regularly but live with their own families.

A has a diagnosis of a rare congenital syndrome which presents with a specific pattern of physical features and a moderate to severe intellectual disability. A has very limited speech, he has difficulties with feeding and swallowing. A's sleep pattern is still very disturbed and parents report that A manages on very little sleep. A's condition has deteriorated with age. A was born with some vision but is now completely blind.

A already has a ground floor bedroom which allows A to freely access it and is very familiar with the home environment. The family bathroom is also on the ground floor, but A requires a significant amount of assistance with all personal care. Parents have been trying to assist A into a standard bath for washing, but also for the opportunity for A to engage in sensory play.

One of the things that A enjoys most is getting in the bath. Both parents have back problems and have been struggling with this, therefore they were limiting access to the bath as A can become very distressed due to the difficulties accessing the bath but once in there he is reluctant to get

out. Equipment was trialled in the bath which made the task slightly easier for A but still meant that parents were under considerable strain.

Joint visits were carried out with the Grants Surveyor to discuss the options within the families bathroom. We discussed the use of ceiling track hoisting to lift A in and out of the bath but this would not be appropriate as A is mobile. It was important to create a solution that would meet A's needs but also minimise the risk to the parents when assisting him. If either parent suffered an injury this would have a long term impact on their ability to care for A and also their ability to sustain their livelihood on the farm.

The OT arranged for a Kingkraft rep to meet at A's school in order for A to be able to try out the Easibath with the integral hi – low seat. It was important to trial the bath with A to establish that it could be used if it was installed at home. A's 1-1 at school, was able to encourage A onto the seat and into the empty bath that had been set up in the school hall. A was initially nervous as it was difficult to try and explain what would happen, but he did settle and continue. Consequently, the bath was installed into the bathroom at home and has been a massive success.

The parents are now able to safely assist A to bathe every night as the facilities within the bathing system lift him in and out of the bath, and the hi – low capability allows them to assist him without physical strain to themselves. They are able to maintain a high level of personal hygiene, but A is also able to safely engage in an enjoyable activity that provides some of the sensory stimulation that he misses.

## **Homeless Prevention (Young Person)**

### **Client Z aged 19**

- M had been living in Young Persons Accommodation, since November 2017. Z was expecting a child and was given notice to leave.
- Z had an extensive history of drug usage and a series of previous relationships whereby she was a victim of prolific domestic violence
- Housing Options contacted Z to meet with her. This meeting was a positive and productive one. An in depth discussion took place about previous events in Z's life, and how she would like to move forward in a positive way. Z's goals and ambitions were discussed and this enabled Housing Options to ascertain how to work with Z to achieve the best results

### **Outcome**

- Z's bidding for a property via Monmouthshire Homeseach started to become a stressful experience for her. Housing Options discussed the possibility of exploring the private housing sector with Z and she agreed that this was a positive way forward. Z was made aware of the lack of private rentals in Abergavenny, particularly ones that would meet her housing criteria. Z agreed that Housing Options could search for a private rental in a neighbouring authority on her behalf
- This was looked into and an ideal property was found for Z. Housing Options arranged for a viewing of the property and accompanied Z during this viewing. The application process for Z's rehousing in the private sector began during mid February 2018. Housing Options worked closely with Z throughout the process and two house visits have taken place following Z's move her young persons accommodation to her new accommodation in mid March 2018.