

SUBJECT:	HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT FUTURE PROGRAMME
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	17TH SEPTEMBER 2025
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval in respect of the proposed approach to reviewing and reconfiguring of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) programme, to ensure that it meets identified and future housing support needs.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the proposed approach to reviewing the Housing Support Grant Programme, acknowledging its importance in preventing and supporting homelessness.
- 2.2 To keep elected members updated via People Scrutiny Committee and Members Seminars, as appropriate.

3. KEY ISSUES:

What is Housing Support?

- 3.1 The purpose of Housing Support is to support vulnerable people to have the capability, independence, skills and confidence to access and/or maintain a stable and suitable home. A key aim is to help prevent homelessness and contribute towards Welsh Government's vision of homelessness being rare, brief and un-repeated. To do this, Housing Support is about tackling the root cause of homelessness and assisting people to remain in their accommodation for longer and with developing independence. Housing Support is absolutely critical in Monmouthshire to assist those households maintain temporary accommodation and enable them to both successfully move on to permanent accommodation and sustain permanent accommodation.
- 3.2 The Council expects the relevance of Housing Support (together with wider support) to further increase in the near future, as the Welsh Government has just published the 'Homelessness & Social Housing Allocations (Wales) Bill', which if passed, will not only increase homeless demand but will also increase the relevance and role of Housing Support in regard to its inter-relationship with homelessness.
- 3.3 Housing Support is available to anyone over 16 years of age and living in any tenure. Support is largely provided through floating support arrangements but also through accommodation-based support. Examples of housing support include:
- Help and advice with housing problems and accessing suitable accommodation
 - Advice with budgeting/managing money
 - Helping to get advice on benefits and grants
 - Help to develop daily living skills
 - Help to access other services e.g. health, housing, employment and education
- 3.4 Housing related support is particularly important for those most vulnerable and at risk relating to rough sleeping and occupying temporary and supported accommodation.

3.5 **Monmouthshire Context**

In regard to the current homeless situation in Monmouthshire, Housing support is **absolutely critical** to the Council meeting its homeless and Rapid Rehousing responsibilities, particularly due to the higher level of support needs relating to those needing homeless assistance. For example, preventing homelessness; seeking to avoid the need to sleep rough; helping individuals both maintain their temporary accommodation and move on to permanent housing, and reducing support needs such as substance misuse and mental health.

3.6 The Council funds a programme of support through annual Welsh Government HSG. The grant availability for 2025/26 is £3,411,106. The current HSG Programme as of 1st April 2025 is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

3.7 In the context of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and homelessness, the HSG Programme is a key part of the local toolkit to prevent homelessness. The new Homeless & Allocation Bill further strengthens the duty to prevent homelessness.

3.8 It is considered that there will be benefits of raising the profile and awareness of the availability and role of Housing Support and its relevance to both homelessness and the Council's wider priorities.

Overview of Current High-Level Needs

3.9 The Council has an established programme of housing support in place, but there is a need to refresh and reconfigure the programme to ensure that it is fully fit for purpose and delivers the required strategic and operational benefits. The main priority is to ensure it supports the Council's homeless priorities, including homeless prevention, but it also needs to meet other needs and priorities.

3.10 Table One below provides an overview of the current need identified:

Table One: Current Need

Need*	2023/24	2024/25
Referrals	1810	2115
No. of individuals per support need category:		
Mental Health	897	824
Substance Misuse	103	73
Developmental disorder/learning disability	83	87
Physical Disability	217	263
Domestic Abuse	344	663
Other	392	502
Nos. Currently Supported	1199	919
Nos. Waiting for Support	78	87
Nos. Waiting for Supported Hsg	12	11
Nos. Waiting for Housing First	Not collected	16

Level of support need:	Low Medium High Intensive Not available	Not collected	305 398 136 18 62
Nos of homeless applications		460	403
Nos in temporary accommodation		207	160

**It is the intention to establish additional indicators to further improve the understanding of housing support need, service delivery and the quality and outcomes being achieved.*

HSG Priorities and Purpose of Remodelling the Programme

- 3.11 There is a need to review and reconfigure the programme to address a number of issues relating to the existing programme. The proposed priorities have been particularly informed by the requirements of Welsh Government relating to the role of Housing Support in contributing to tackling homelessness and the transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach, existing Housing Support need and homelessness related need.
- 3.12 Also, feedback from Providers has and will continue to be considered e.g. recruitment challenges, sustainability etc. The Council has regular contact with Providers though a number of formal and informal arrangements. This has included recent engagement in regard to current and proposed procurement requirements and intentions.
- 3.13 Key aims of remodelling the HSG programme include:
- The wish for the Council team to meet all identified needs within the County, this will not be possible within the current budget window. In the context of 211 applicants with high or intensive support needs at the end of July 2025, identified gaps and capacity shortfalls in the existing programme include:
 - Specialist Mental Health screening to strengthen both the assessment of need and to help facilitate the acquisition/delivery of support.
 - Complex needs supported housing – north and south of the county.
 - Mental Health supported housing with the ability to accept high needs individuals.
 - Temporary accommodation support is not adequately aligned to the actual accommodation itself.
 - There is a lack of support capacity in respect of young people and hoarding.
 - Specialist domestic abuse screening to strengthen both the assessment of need and to help facilitate the acquisition/delivery of support.
 - To increase value for money and economies of scale - there is scope to reduce the number of projects by consolidating activities, which in turn will help to reduce overall management overheads resulting in better value for money.
 - Effective housing support will help to deliver cost benefits and cost avoidance e.g. help prevent households become homeless, thereby avoiding potential homeless related costs.
 - As required by Welsh Government, the need to implement a revised pricing/payment schedule for Providers to support Providers to pay support staff the Real Living Wage as a minimum. This will support staff recruitment and

retention and, therefore, programme sustainability. **See Section 6 - Paragraph 6.4**

- To increase the resilience and flexibility of individual projects. Larger projects with more staff will help to mitigate against staff absences relating to vacancies, sickness and annual leave. Larger pools of staff will also enable projects to flex as necessary in response to rising issues.
- To mitigate against inappropriate staff/client ratios.
- To reduce the number of projects to strengthen contract management arrangements. Less projects will help the Council to undertake regular contract monitoring and, therefore, more rigorous contract management whilst also being able to offer additional support to individual projects.
- To increase the focus on quality and outcomes and better understanding the impact individual support projects is having on the lives of individuals.
- To ensure it fully aligns with homelessness and Rapid Rehousing and, therefore, improves homeless related outcomes e.g. homeless prevention; move-on to permanent accommodation etc. Refreshing the programme allows the Council to review individual project specifications to ensure projects deliver what is required.
- To ensure individual projects contracted to external agencies are compliant with the Council's Contract Procurement Rules. Procurement processes will be used to ensure that tendering and eventual project delivery incorporates the need to meet wider Council priorities.

- 3.14 An overview of the HSG funded programme from April 2025 is provided in **Appendix 1, Table 1**. **Table 2** lists the projects decommissioned during 2024/25 as part of the initial review process.

Next Steps for Projects Operated by External Agencies

- 3.15 The majority of projects operated by external agencies were scheduled to end on 31st March 2025. As advised by the Ardal Procurement Service, there has been a need to renew all the projects through Direct Awards. This is a current priority of the HSG team. Where applicable, all the Direct Awards are expected to commence from 1st October 2025.
- 3.16 All of the Direct Awards will be relatively short-term and will have staggered end dates spread over the next couple of years to provide the time and space to implement a phased approach to a re-procurement and refresh of the programme.
- 3.17 This will enable the team to systematically plan and focus on individual support themes (e.g. Domestic Abuse, Young People etc) in terms of engaging with existing Providers, preparing revised fit for purpose specifications and procurement documentation, consulting on proposals and implementing robust tendering exercises. The intention is work towards an evidence based Indicative HSG Programme, that effectively creates a vision of housing support to work towards.

Indicative HSG Programme for Future Delivery

- 3.18 An Indicative HSG Programme has been established as a 'vision' and the basis for the future delivery of housing support. This is based on priorities, need and the level of funding available. It is expected that there will be insufficient funding to deliver projects that address all identified need.
- 3.19 The Indicative HSG Programme is detailed in **Appendix 1, Table 3**. This may change over time should need, priorities or funding change.

3.20 **The Proposed Approach**

The proposed approach to refreshing the HSG Programme will be based on the following:

- In general terms, the aim is for the approach to be inclusive and transparent, whilst also seeking to raise the profile and awareness of Housing Support.
- The approach will aim to support wider priorities and contribute to the Council's Community & Corporate Plan.
- HSG Planning Groups will be booked in to tie in with tendering timetables and will be themed to each tender. For example, the most recent meeting was on 25th July 2025 and focused on Generic Services.
 - This provides an opportunity for wider services to engage and contribute to individual tenders as appropriate.
- Collate need evidence to inform the proposed recommissioning through engagement with wider services, including existing HSG Providers, and an invitation to contribute.
 - This will also be an opportunity to potentially identify good practice to inform specifications.
- Draft fit for purpose specifications and circulate to relevant services for comment
 - Ensure that this reflects accessible services and no one is disadvantaged.

3.21 Through this approach, for each tender, the team will be well placed to demonstrate and evidence the identified support need and the current situation and thorough engagement with key stakeholders has been undertaken, providing good opportunity for stakeholders to be involved and influence the development of the proposal.

3.22 The first tender will be Generic Services and Assertive Outreach & Temporary Accommodation. The broad timeline for preparing this project and establishing the contract is:

- Late September 2025 – Tender Issued on Sell2Wales
- End December 2025 – award contract
- January – March 2026 – transition period
- 1st April 2026 – new Generic Services contract starts.

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

4.1 The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation Assessment detailed in **Appendix 2**, has identified that overall, the refresh of the HSG Programme has positive benefits. Negative implications, however, have been identified.

4.2 An overview of the negative implications include:

- Possible risk of redundancy in the event of Providers not being awarded a future contract, although TUPE regulations would apply. It will be a priority of the Council to support Providers in this regard to wherever possible, avoid any redundancies.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Various options exist to establish a refreshed Housing Support Grant programme. These can be summarised as below:

Option	Benefit	Risk	Comment
Option 1. The Proposed Option. To refresh and reconfigure the HSG programme as per Appendix 1, Table 3	<p>The proposed programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is aligned with the Council's homeless needs. Seeks to address the current identified need and delivery issues. Contract packaging will address support delivery issues and capacity issues to increase resilience and sustainability. Addresses fragmented delivery arrangements e.g. generic services. Consolidates and streamlines the number of projects which both has cost benefits to strengthen contract monitoring arrangements. Increases management control of contracts. Improved outcomes and performance. Real living wage will be paid to support workers as required by Welsh Government. Supports the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. 	<p>There may be a risk to providers in respect of the potential to lose contracts.</p> <p>The Council may need to indemnify potential redundancy costs in tendering arrangements</p>	<p>Every effort will be made to work with and support Providers and if applicable, help to mitigate against potential redundancies.</p> <p>TUPE may be applicable in respect of certain contracts.</p> <p>The HSG Commissioning Team are engaging with Legal.</p>
Options 2 Package Contracts Differently	<p>Contract packaging is arguably subjective, but an alternative approach to packaging could be adopted. But the proposed packaging of</p>	<p>There may be a risk to providers in respect of the potential to lose contracts.</p> <p>The Council may need to indemnify potential</p>	

	<p>projects has taken account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCC and homeless priorities • Staff and service user feedback • Statistical evidence • HSG availability • Contract management capacity • Procurement rules and regulations 	<p>redundancy costs in tendering arrangements</p>	
<p>Option 3 – To configure the delivery of the programme differently in terms of those services delivered by the Council and external Providers</p>	<p>The proposed configuring of the delivery of the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects the strategic role of the Council e.g. identify need, co-ordinate delivery etc • Will strengthen the Council's control and influence of the delivery of support in key areas e.g. temporary homeless accommodation. • Exploit experience and specialism where applicable e.g. domestic abuse 	<p>There may be a risk to providers in respect of the potential to lose contracts</p> <p>The Council may need to indemnify potential redundancy costs in tendering arrangements</p>	
<p>Option 4 – Allow the existing programme to continue to run without change</p>	<p>There are no benefits to this option beyond, although this option supports existing Providers in terms of contract continuity.</p>	<p>The current programme is not fit for purpose and is not sufficiently aligned with need.</p> <p>There is a need to meet procurement rules and regulations</p> <p>Existing specifications need updating</p> <p>It won't improve value for money</p> <p>The Council's contract</p>	

		It promotes Provider complacency	
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6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The current HSG Programme (**See Appendix 1, Table 1**) is fully funded by Welsh Government, together with a contribution of Social Care of £110,281 to the Young Persons Supported Housing projects.

6.2 The funding for 2025/26 is £3,411,106.

6.3 Although the programme is fully funded, the HSG availability to the Council is insufficient to meet all identified support needs of Monmouthshire. As a result, some projects operate with waiting lists, and it is not possible to fund all the housing support projects required to meet this locally identified need.

6.4 To help support project sustainability and to meet Welsh Government expectation that support staff are paid the Real Living Wage. The following Pricing Schedule will be implemented, which is based on projected 2025/26 project costs submitted by Providers through Welsh Government HSG procedures:

- £49,000 p.a. per support officer and pro-rata (the previous funding is £36,000 p.a.).
- Plus, tariff for specialist services:
 - 1 – 5 client ratio 7.50%
 - 6 – 10 client ratio 5.0%
 - 11 – 15 client ratio 2.5%

6.5 The capacity and quality of housing support available has a direct correlation to the wider Council revenue budget, although it's not possible to measure the potential and actual impact. For example, effective housing support will:

- Help to prevent homelessness and, thereby, will help reduce the number of households presenting as homeless and possibly needing temporary accommodation. At present there is a cost to the Council of providing temporary accommodation, particularly Bed and Breakfast.
- Assist homeless residents of temporary accommodation to meet the conditions of their occupancy such as meeting their obligations to pay rent or responsibly occupy their accommodation e.g. report repairs and avoid damage.

6.6 The following continue to be regarded as gaps or insufficient capacity in the current programme:

- Mental Health Screening
- Mental Health Supported Accommodation
- Severn View – 24-hour support as an alternative to relying on 24-hour security
- Complex Needs Supported Housing
- Domestic Abuse Screening for Housing Options Team
- Additional Young Persons Supported Housing Capacity
- Generic Services Capacity
- Hereford Road Mental Health Supported Housing
- Hospital Discharge Support

7. CONSULTEES

7.1 Cabinet; Senior Leadership Team; Infrastructure & DMT; Housing & Communities

7.2 The proposal was considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on 16th July 2025.

7.3 As the review of the programme progresses, elected Members will be updated via People Scrutiny Committee and Members Seminars, as appropriate.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Welsh Government, Rapid Rehousing: Guidance
- Welsh Government, Homelessness & Social Housing Allocations (Wales) Bill 2025

9. AUTHORS:

Ian Bakewell, Strategic Housing Manager

10. CONTACT DETAILS: ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk; 01633 644479

Appendix 1

Table 1 – HSG Programme 2025/26

Project	Function	Situation/Comments
Generic Services		
Generic Floating Support Service	Generic floating support	One of several generic support services. There is currently a waiting list for Generic Support.
Tenancy Support Service	Generic and temporary accommodation floating support	As above
Housing & Well-being Support	Chepstow	As above
Housing & Well-Being Support	Monmouth	As above
Housing & Well-Being Support	Abergavenny	As above
Homeless Services		
Temporary Accommodation	Floating support for temporary homeless accommodation	<p>Continuity of temporary accommodation and staff recruitment can create operational challenges.</p> <p>There would be benefits of temporary accommodation support being more closely aligned with the accommodation itself and housing management requirements. Available capacity can impact on the level of support provided for higher need applicants.</p>
Assertive Outreach Service	Rough sleeper and sofa surfing support	Working well, but there would be benefits to extending the hours into early evening. Client feedback has identified that there is a lack of officer continuity after being accommodated, as support transfers to another Provider

Housing First	Housing Support for those with chronic social care and health needs. The project aims to also provide accommodation.	Working well, but reliant on suitable properties being identified made available by Registered Social Landlords which were previously suspended. The project has been recently reviewed, and capacity has increased from 2 to 4 fte. This is a very important project from a homeless perspective, due to the number of homeless applicants with higher needs- and need more intensive support. There is currently awaiting list for this service.
Family Services		
Family Intervention Project	Dedicated family support	Referral levels were very low resulting in a low caseload.
Mental Health Services		
TASL	Mental Health floating support and farmer support and Mental Health Prevention Support Officer	Working well. The service delivers added value through informal (e.g., not contractual) access to MIND supported accommodation. Whilst this is beneficial, access cannot be guaranteed as higher need individuals may be declined. For 2024/25, this also includes the Mental Health Prevention Support Officer which has been absorbed into the main TASL service.
Welfare Rights	Welfare Rights	Working well
Hoarding	Specialist hoarding support	New service during 2024/25. Working well, although the current capacity is insufficient to meet needs, which has resulted in a waiting list.
Domestic Abuse Services		
Crisis Project	Short-term and responsive emergency intervention	Working well, although service is can only be accessed by females.
Domestic Abuse Courses and Group Work	Specialist training support	As above
Refuge	Specialist emergency accommodation	As above

MODAS	Specialist intervention floating support worker	Working well. Available for both female and male clients. The issue is continuity in respect of applicants on crisis moving to MODAS and having to change Provider. There is a need to avoid re-assessment.
Target Hardening	Equipment installation to mitigate against Domestic Abuse	Working well
Young People		
Youth Outreach	Specialist outreach service for young people	Staff retention and recruitment have created challenges. Project capacity is also an issue.
Young Persons Supported Housing Projects	Specialist supported housing at Hill-House, Sunnyside and Woodstock House	Working well, although there is insufficient capacity to meet needs. Joint project with Social Care Children's Services who contribute financially to the funding.
Substance Misuse Service		
Assertive Outreach – Substance Misuse	Specialist assertive outreach service for people with drug and alcohol issues.	Working well, although capacity is an issue in relation to levels of need.
Older People Service		
Healthy at Home	Preventative home safety support for older people focuses on risk assessing homes.	Working well and an effective prevention service for older people.
In House Services		
Housing Support Team	The HSG Gateway provides a single point of contact and assessment for housing support. The team also includes a Low Level Support Officer who provides short-term responsive interventions.	Working well
Benefit Service	Benefit advice and assistance	Working well. Initially set up to support people in relation to the introduction of Universal Credit and mitigate against the anticipated risks identified at the time of introduction.
Support Service Co-Ordinator	Housing Intervention Panel and Housing First co-ordination	Working well

Family Mediation	Support for young people and families who are clients of MCC Children's Services	Working well.
Severn View Temporary Accommodation	Dedicated support for the residents of Severn View	New service for 2025/26 – started in July 2025.
Regional Projects		
Regional Development Co-Ordinator	MCC contribution to a regional network	Working well

Table 2 – Projects Decommissioned During 2024/25

Project	Function	Situation/Comments
Criminal Offending	Regional prison release service	Did not work effectively and did not provide value for money. No prison attendance provided as was originally expected.
Family Mediation Project	Young persons support for those excluded from home.	Not working effectively. Staffing has been an issue. Referral rates are low. Family mediation has been being incorporated into the Compass Youth Homeless project.

Table 3 - Future Indicative Programme & Timeline for Delivering 2026/27 - Post Direct Awards Onwards*

**May be subject to possible future change in relation to changes in need, funding, arising opportunities etc*

Project	Function	Target Start Date	Estimated Value	Situation/Comments
Generic Services				
Generic Floating Support Service	Generic floating support repackaging multiple projects into a single project. Key priority homeless prevention	Contract to be relet by or before 1 st July 2026	£490,000	<p>There will be a need to decommission the five existing generic projects.</p> <p>The proposed capacity is not expected to fully meet needs and, therefore, it is anticipated that a waiting list will still be necessary.</p>

Homeless Services				
Assertive Outreach & Temporary Homeless Accommodation	Consolidation of Assertive Outreach and Temporary Homeless Accommodation Support to provide seamless support.	As above	£450,000	With dual functions this will facilitate continuity of support when a rough sleeper moves into temporary accommodation. The aim will be to extend the Assertive Outreach hours beyond normal office hours into early evening.
Housing First	Housing Support for those with chronic social care and health needs. The project aims to also provide accommodation.	1 st April 2027	£205,000	Supported by the provision of accommodation by RSL's.
Young Persons				
Youth Outreach	Specialist outreach service for young people	Contract to be relet by or before 1 st October 2026	£125,000	
Young Person Supported Accommodation	Specialist supported housing at Hill-House, Sunnyside and Woodstock House. Joint initiative with Children's Services	Contract to be relet by or before 1 st October 2026	£560,000	
Domestic Abuse				
Domestic Abuse Project including: Refuge Crisis and Floating Support Courses & Group Work	Specialist emergency accommodation Short-term and responsive emergency intervention. Specialist training support for both those on support and not on support.	Contract to be let by or before 1 st April 2027	£350,000	Domestic abuse services need to be available and accessible for all genders.

Target Hardening	Equipment installation to mitigate against Domestic Abuse	Contract to be let by 1 st April 2027	£10,000	
Family Services				
Family Intervention Project	Dedicated family support	1 st April 2027	£51,450	
Mental Health Services				
Mental Health Floating Support	Mental Health specialist floating support	1 st July 2026	£510,000	
Hoarding	Specialist hoarding support	1 st April 2027	£61,450	
Financial Inclusion				
Substance Misuse Service				
Assertive Outreach – Substance Misuse	Specialist assertive outreach service for people with drug and alcohol issues.	1 st April 2027	£100,000	
Older People Service				
Healthy at Home	Preventative home safety support for older people that focuses on risk assessing homes.	1 st April 2027	£49,000	
In-House Service				
Housing Support Team	<p>The main service is the HSG Gateway, which provides a single point of contact and assessment for housing support.</p> <p>The team also includes a Low Level Support Officer who</p>	N/A	£359,281	

	provides short-term responsive interventions.			
Benefit Service	Benefit advice and assistance.	N/A	£80,850	
Support Service Co-Ordinator	Housing Intervention Panel and Housing First co-ordination	N/A	£49,000	
Family Mediation	Support for young people and families who are clients of MCC.	N/A	£15,000	Joint service between Compass Young Persons Project and Children's Services
Severn View Temporary Accommodation	Dedicated support for the residents of Severn View	June 2025	£62,880	
Regional Projects				
Regional Development Co-Ordinator	MCC contribution to a regional network hosted by TCBC	N/A	£4,678	