Wrexham Housing Support Grant (HSG)

Annual Delivery Plan 2021-22

Contents

1. Introduction

Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) delivers, and enables the delivery of, services to people who live in, work in and visit the County Borough. The services provided include education, social services, housing, planning, environment and leisure.

The Council works constantly to reshape and configure services in order to make the best use of available resources to support and enable local people to prosper whilst prioritising our most vulnerable residents.

Housing Support Grant (HSG)

Housing Support Grant was introduced by the Welsh Government (WG) in 2020 and amalgamates three previous grants: Supporting People Programme Grant, Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement.

WG allocates HSG to local authorities to support non-statutory, early interventions that will prevent people from becoming homeless; stabilise their housing situation; or help potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.

HSG is expected to work collaboratively with Children and Communities Grant (CCG) to provide integrated services where appropriate; and can provide complementary support for people who may also need statutory personal or medical care: however, it cannot fund care or any other statutory service provision.

The Housing Support Programme Strategy and HSG Delivery Plan

The Welsh Government's Housing Support Grant Practice Guidance 2020 requires local authorities to develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy for both statutory homeless and non-statutory support services every four years, together with an annual HSG Delivery Plan.

Due to the need to synchronise the HSP Strategy with existing Homelessness Strategies, and the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Minister for Housing and Local Government agreed in August 2020 to defer the requirement for Local Authorities to submit a four year HSP Strategy until December 2021.

Local Authorities are, however, required to produce a HSG Annual Delivery Plan by December 2020.

How have we produced this Plan?

In producing this plan we have:

- Considered Wrexham's local and regional HSG priorities for the coming year and how we will deliver on them.

- Consulted with service users, service providers and stakeholders to inform service and strategic priorities. In view of Covid-19 restrictions, consultation has been carried out via questionnaires and virtual meetings rather than face-to-face interviews.

- Compiled and analysed data to inform an assessment of need, including the impact of, and response to, Covid-19.

- Conducted an Equality Impact Assessment and considered how this and other impact assessments can inform the delivery plan.

- Had reference to Wrexham's Local Spend Plan and Local Commissioning Plan.

- Taken into account WCBC's delivery of statutory Homelessness services.

What happens next?

The Housing Support Grants and Development Team will submit the following sections of the Delivery Plan to WG as part of our HSG funding submission:

- HSG delivery priorities.

- Stakeholder engagement.

- Local spend plan.

- Homelessness statutory duties summary.

We will commence work towards the development of Wrexham's first Housing Support Programme Strategy, to be submitted to WG in December 2021.

We will continue to ensure that HSG commissioned services are strategically relevant, high quality and deliver value for money.

2. HSG Delivery Priorities

Housing Support Grant Delivery Priority for 2021/22

Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic and Preparing Phase 2 Plan

The impacts of the pandemic are likely to be with us for some time to come, therefore our priority for this year will be developing and remodelling Housing Support Grant funded projects building upon recent achievements.

Support Services will play a critical part in the solution of homelessness. Support Services will contribute in ensuring that everyone the Local Authority has brought into temporary accommodation is supported into long term accommodation.

The recommendations in our Local Commissioning Plan for HSG services are all designed to contribute to the delivery of this one over-arching priority.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

Consultation Evidence.

Consultation with Key Stakeholders and Service Users.

Consultation has remained a key priority and has contributed significantly to this delivery plan. In the main consultation has taken place through the Housing Support Grant and Development Team in partnership with our Planning Group. In addition to this we have an established support provider consultation group which meet regularly to discuss ongoing performance and good practice changes.

This analysis provides an overview of the feedback received from our Stakeholders and Service Users within the borough, specifically with regard to the Housing Support Grant and Development Services. In accordance with the Housing Support Grant Guidance published in April 2020 consultation and engagement it sets out how local authorities should approach the requirement to consult and engage:

> Local authorities are responsible for developing their HSP Strategy and HSG Delivery Plan. In the process they must consult and engage with the following stakeholders. This engagement must be undertaken in line with the duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the 5 Ways of Working.

- Health.

- Social Services.

- Probation.

- VAWDASV Partnership Boards.

- Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards.

- Children and Communities Grant.

- Providers.

- Landlords.

- People who use HSG services.

- Carers and families of people who use HSG services.

In asking for our clients' contributions, we can identify key elements such as geographic location, demographics, service characteristics, our target service needs and how these needs are, or are not, currently being met.

This section also includes a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis, to better assess how our strategy can be informed, where gaps in services exist and how budgeting and development of services can be improved. As a result of the questions we posed to our stakeholders and service users there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn.

On the whole it would appear that the services provided by us in conjunction with our partners are more than satisfactory. In fact there is evidence to support some excellent service provision in several areas highlighted below:

"There are excellent teams/organisations supporting people with various difficulties (DA, youth unemployment and education, SMS, homelessness, mental health, etc.)."

"Continued referral system and information sharing I feel is working well."

"None, I feel my service provider has a good working relationship with WCBC."

"From what I have experienced so far the partnership between the HSG teams and Clwyd Alyn schemes in Wrexham works very well, we get all the support we need when we need it."

"My support worker has phoned and called at the house once or twice a week which has been great."

"Face to face and phone calls which has been a great help."

"My support worker has phoned and called at the house once or twice a week. He has given food parcels and money for utility bills. I can't thank him enough the contact keeps my mental health stable."

"My support worker has called to my flat and phoned. I have had great support off him. Food parcels, money for my electric. I was living in a tent before I was with my service provider. I now have my own flat I see my children and they come to stay."

"My support during lockdown was fine with no issues, using technology wasn't a problem and my support never changed, I was supported well."

"I have been really grateful for the support I received during lockdown, I was spoken to regularly and any issues I had were sorted quickly."

"Just seeing my support worker makes a big difference currently. I suffer with mental health and he is a big help to me."

"We receive a lot of support during lockdown off all professionals."

"Easy to access support."

"Supported as usual - 24 hour support."

"It has been brilliant I can't fault the support I have received."

However, there are always improvements that can be made and as a result of the feedback provided it is clear that there are gaps in provision across a number of areas.

This will need to be looked at more closely and considered in more detail when we look at our service model, service providers, the services they currently offer, value for money and whether or not there is an alternative service that could offer the services sought.

The main areas for concern raised for gaps in provision are detailed below:

- More support with local employment/business/education to help revive the town.

- Lack of supported living flats in town centre.

- Lack of affordable accommodation and private landlords not accepting housing benefits.

- DV victims not able to leave the perpetrators due to long waiting time with housing applications.

- More supported living for young people leaving care.

- There is lack of provisions for people who have high support needs.

- More services for homeless people with significant Mental Health issues.

- Not enough outreach flats e.g. Hurst Newton flats for clients that are ready for move on into 1-bedroom properties.

- No dual diagnosis workers available. Long waiting lists for mental health services which is often prolonged when the client needs to register with a GP.

- Difficulty in obtaining ID if young person has no family or money. Opening a bank account is also problematic for young people that have no ID.

- Limited temporary accommodation for placing families with young children in B&Bs.

- Limited private rented accommodation available to UC claimants.

- More mental health provision - schemes that are set up to work with people who have long term Mental Health issues - staff who can deal with someone's MH crisis on site ideally.

- Prison leavers – more accommodation for those who have served longer sentences where they can be fully supported for up to say 6 months.

- Prison leavers lack of suitable/safe accommodation for people with a history of sexual offending - with trained staff who understand the complexity/risk of this client group.

- More accommodation that is smaller and focused for people with a variety of complex needs but who are very vulnerable - particularly people with autism.

- More accommodation for those leaving re-hab - which is still supported and can continue the support they received in re-hab. More re-hab.

- More small Mum and Baby units. 3, 4 bed units for those that are younger and need a lot more support and who would benefit from a more therapeutic environment them in one place.

- More provision for people with Mental Health who just need to have a short term placement.

The sources of the feedback are details from our stakeholders indicating the areas they cover geographically in addition to our own borough as some stakeholders may service other local authority catchments.

|		Borough(s)
A	Voyage Care	3
B	Cais	1
C	Hafan Cymru	1
D	WCBC Project Management/Disability Team	1
E	JustONE	1
F	BAWSO	2
G	WCBC Housing Options	2
H	Nacro	1
I	Clwyd Alyn	6
J	Family Aid	1
K	Church in Wales	1
L	Youth Homelessness Prevention Service	1
M	Strategy and Development Lead	1
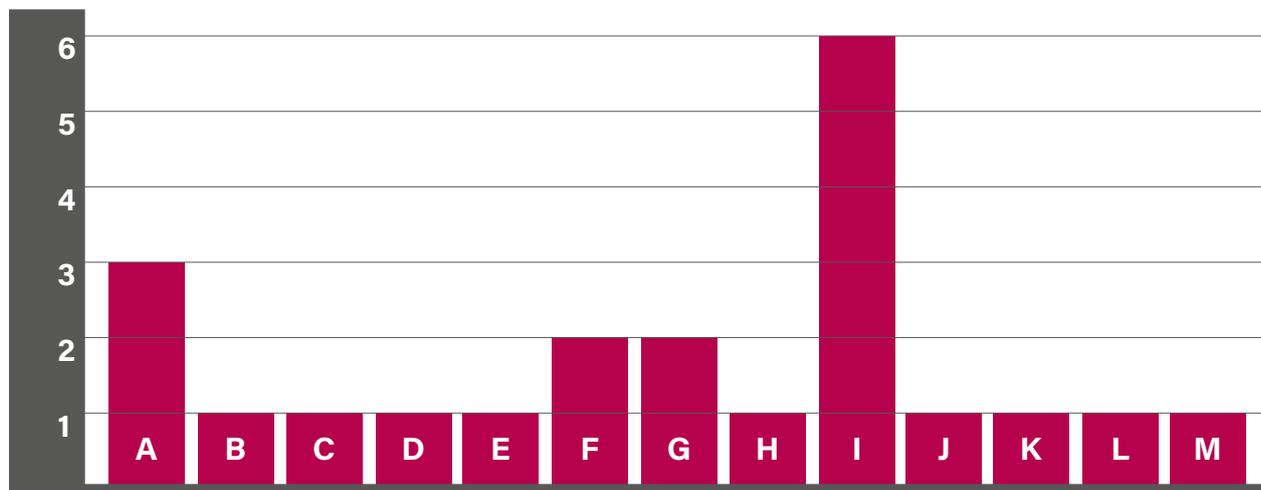
Areas/Activities in which Service Users had Received Support

This Graph Shows Areas/Activities in which Service Users had Received Support.

These were the data categories that we asked service users to measure in the feedback questionnaires we sent out to them. Questions asked if they felt like they had received support with through the services accessed/offered by our service providers.

		Borough(s)
A	Feeling Safe	105
B	Safety and Wellbeing of self and others	76
C	Managing accommodation	124
D	Managing relationships	75
E	Feeling part of the community	65
F	Managing Money	123
G	Engaging in education/learning	20
H	Engaged in employment/volunteer work	20
I	Physically healthy	83
J	Mentally healthy	90
K	Healthy and active lifestyle	74
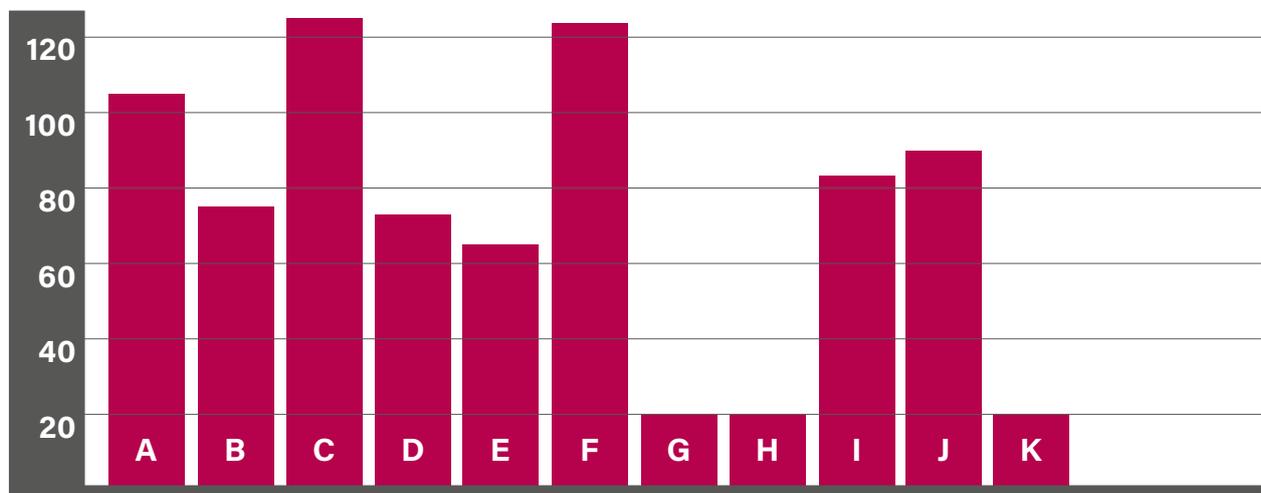
Service User Questionnaire Replies – Support Service/Provider Organisation

The number of replies from service users through all our services providers in number total and percentage value as the proportion of the total.

			replies	%
	A	CAIS	22	14
	B	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	22	15
	C	Age Connect	48	32
	D	Blue Corridor	6	4
	E	Moorlands	10	7
	F	Hafan Cymru	4	3
	G	WCBC Children's Social Care (Family Aid)	9	6
	H	WCBC Adult Social Care (Learning Disability Service)	29	19

H WCBC Adult Social Care
(Learning Disability Service)
29 Replies / 19%

A CAIS
22 Replies / 14%

G WCBC Children's
Social Care
(Family Aid)
9 Replies / 6%

B Clwyd Alyn
Housing
Association
22 Replies
15%

F Hafan Cymru
4 Replies / 3%

E Moorlands
10 Replies / 7%

D Blue Corridor
6 Replies / 4%

C Age Connect
48 Replies / 32%
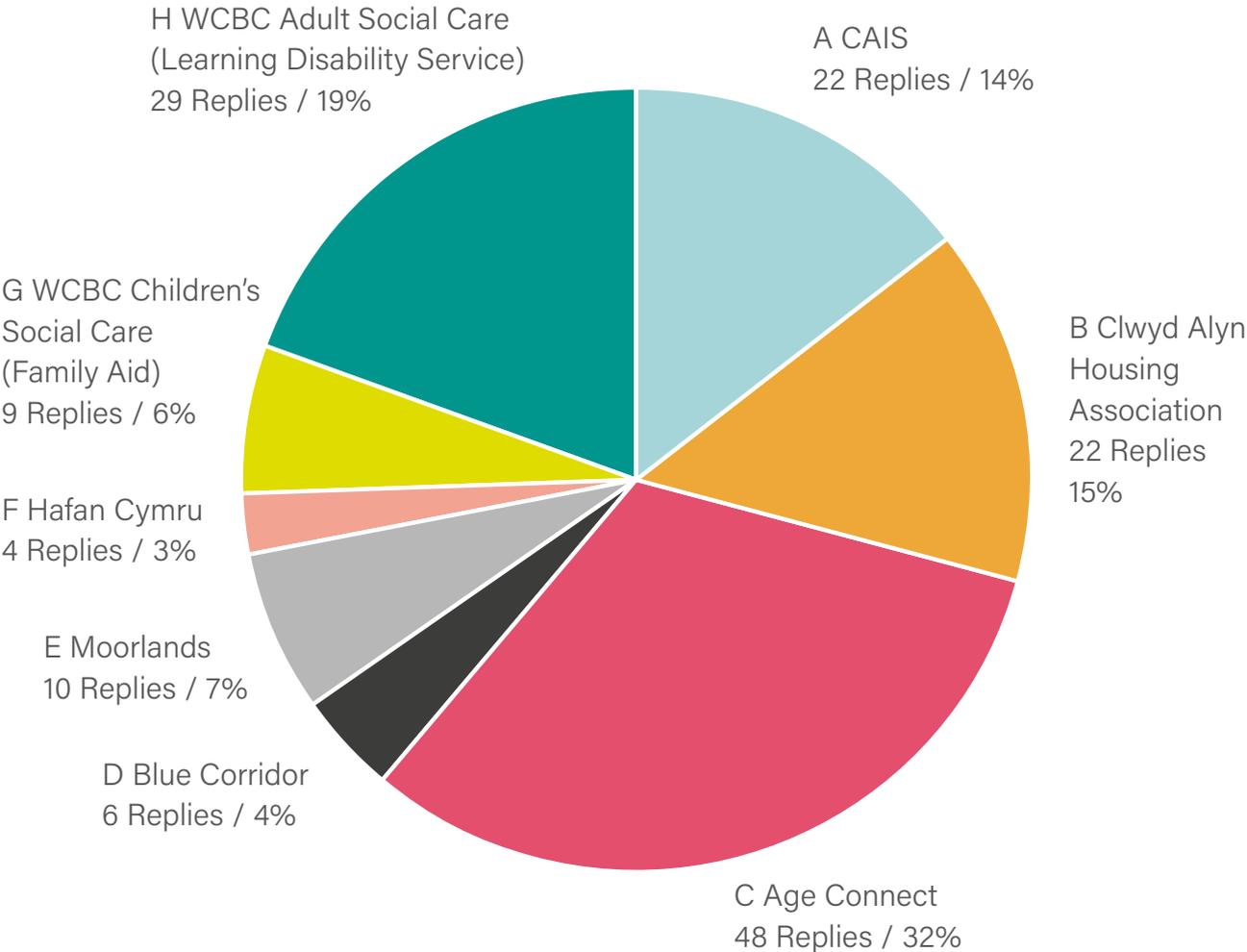
SWOT Analysis:

A SWOT analysis allow us to assess our services in the current environment in terms of strengths and weaknesses (internal) and opportunities and threats (external). This is a good exercise to go through on an annual basis. After completing the details for analysis, it shows how your strengths can help you to maximise opportunities and minimise weaknesses.

Strengths:

What we do well, how we adapt, our relationships with our stakeholders, service users and clients. The variety of services we can offer. The number of clients we can support and the success stories resulting from the services they can access.

Weaknesses:

The gaps in provision of services. The fact that our budget does not allow us to do everything we would like. That some clients can't access services. Not enough places within the service provision to cater for all that require support.

Opportunities:

Recognise the role of other service providers in developing more of a holistic approach.

Threats:

The potential issues resulting from the pandemic. The lack of sufficient funds to support all of the services we want to provide. The lack of frontline engagement from clients. The loss of experienced staff.

Conclusion

The consultation results produced against each of the areas above are used to inform the commissioning process going forward. We received 185 responses overall. From our 55 stakeholders we received 23 responses or 41%.

Both Stakeholders and service users have been given this opportunity to contribute to the planning process in development of both current and future services.

Internal Factors

Strengths

Our dedicated staff

Our well established relationships with our partners

Our abilty to adapt services quicky

Weaknesses

Being unable to help everyone

Not enough service provision

Budgetary constraints

External Factors

Opportunities

Improving relationships with our external partners

Growing our service connections

Developing services to meet the need

Threats

Lack of engagement of service users

Resultant outcomes from the longevity of the pandemic

Possible non compliance with service provider contracts

4. Needs Assessment

This Chapter will give an overview of the Needs Assessment developed by WCBC's Housing Support Grants and Development Team. The Needs Assessment employed a range of data collection methods and was informed by a variety of sources.

Data from Housing Support Referral Gateway

The Housing Support Referral Gateway ensures the co-ordination of Housing-Related Support services for people who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless. The Gateway ensures that those presenting to the service are signposted to the most relevant service and avoid the duplication of support for individuals across different agencies. It acts a single point of access for the majority of HSG funded services in Wrexham and also has referral relationships with numerous other organisations and services which are not HSG funded. There is a single referral form which records information on a person's needs and housing situation at the point of referral for a HSG funded service.

The support needs of referrals received from 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2020 are shown in the chart below. 3068 records in total were analysed. Over one third of people were referred with Homeless/Potentially Homeless as their primary support need. 1136 stated Homelessness as their primary support need, with a further 52 people stating that the support need was relevant, a total of 1188 identified Homeless/Potentially Homeless as a support need. However, this does not give the underlying reasons behind the homelessness or threat of homelessness therefore information on any further support needs (where stated) was also collated.

Support Needs of Housing Support Gateway Referrals
(01/04/2018 to 30/09/2020)

Support Need/Category	Primary Support Need	Support Need Relevant But Not Primary	Total Identifying Support Need
Mental Health	329	162	491
Young Person	273	127	400
Older Person	329	4	333
Vulnerable Single Parent	216	55	271
Vulnerable Family	220	5	225
Criminal Justice Issues	52	152	204
Substance Misuse	83	80	163
Physical Health	80	61	141
Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence	90	40	136
Learning Disability	50	27	77
Physical Disability	44	22	66
Alcohol Misuse	13	16	29
Veteran	2	14	16
Chronic Illness	3	9	12
Refugee	2	7	9
Sensory Impairment	5	3	8
Drug Misuse	3	1	4
Gypsy/Traveller	1	1	3
Homeless/Potentially Homeless	1136	52	1188
Unknown/Not Stated	131	-	-

After Homeless/Potentially Homeless, the most common primary support categories were Older Person, Mental Health and Young Person. The most prevalent further support needs were Mental Health, Criminal Justice Issues, and Young Person. The most common overall support categories (after Homeless/Potentially Homeless) were Mental Health, Young Person and Older Person.

The accommodation/housing situation of persons referred to the Housing Support Gateway between 1st April 2018 and 30th September 2020 is shown in the following chart.

Housing Situation of Referrals to Housing Support Gateway (01/04/2018 to 30/09/2020)

Accommodation/Housing Situation	Number of Referrals
Local Authority Housing	1209
Housing Association	87
Owner Occupier	103
Private Rented Accommodation	306
Student Accommodation	2
Tied Accommodation	1
Sheltered Housing	45
Extra Care Housing	2
Residential Care	7
Residential Detox	2
Hospital	9
Hospital - Mental Health	12
Supported Accommodation	44
NASS Accommodation	17
Refuge	16
Prison or Approved Premises	156
Leaving Care	14
Parent and Child Foster Placement	3
Friends/Family	455
No Fixed Abode	312
Sleeping Rough	12
Temporary Homeless Accommodation	172
Unknown/Not Recorded	82

Almost 40% of persons referred were currently residing in Local Authority Housing, with the next most common housing situations being living with friends or family, of no fixed abode and private rented accommodation.

Supporting People Outcomes Reporting

Providers of former Supporting People Programme Grant services are required to submit an outcomes return for each client at the start of support, every 6 months and/or when a person exits a service. At the start of support, the person in receipt of the service is asked which client support categories are relevant to their support needs. The person is also asked which of those areas are considered as main/lead need, secondary and third need. The following chart shows client support categories relevant to people at the start of their support for outcomes returns completed from January 2018 to June 2020.

Support Needs at Start of Support
(Service Starts between January 2018 and June 2020)

Client Support Category	Lead Support Need	2nd or 3rd Support Need	Support Need Relevant
Alarms	63	5	128
Chronic Illness	8	20	25
Offending	24	56	114
Developmental Disorders	7	28	42
Families	60	37	95
Generic	106	105	229
Learning Disabilities	51	40	98
Domestic Abuse - Men	2	4	8
Mental Health	228	299	570
Over 55	247	227	463
Physical/Sensory Disability	177	109	306
Refugee	2	4	5
Single Parent Families	159	73	237
Single 25-54	183	29	222
Alcohol Issues	58	33	119
Drug Issues	64	95	208
Domestic Abuse - Women	83	27	123
Care Leavers	3	21	26
Young People	274	23	300

The most frequently occurring lead client support categories at the start of support were: young people with support needs (16-24), over 55 years of age with support needs (exclusive of alarm services), and mental health issues. When all relevant needs are considered the most prevalent was mental health with almost a third of people stating that this was relevant to their support needs, followed over 55 years of age with support needs (exclusive of alarm services), physical and/or sensory disabilities and young people with support needs.

Between January and June 2020, 275 exits from support were reported on Outcomes returns. 209 or around three quarters of these were reported as planned endings of support and 66 or around one quarter as unplanned.

The reasons for support ending is also collected on Outcomes returns and the reasons for the 66 unplanned support endings are broken down as follows.

Reasons for Support Ending (Unplanned) January to June 2020

Reason for Support Ending	Number
Client deceased	33
Entered a Mental Health Unit	1
Entered prison/young offenders institution	2
Moved into a Care Home	1
Moved out of the area	3
Non-engagement with support	13
Service user did not want support	5
Other	8

Almost half of support endings recorded as unplanned were given as 'client deceased' which could be interpreted as either planned or unplanned depending on the circumstances.

Support ended for a significant number of people due to non-engagement with support (13 people) or not wanting support (5 people).

Housing Support Grant Quarterly Monitoring Returns

Housing Support Grant service providers submit quarterly returns to the Housing Support Grants and Development Team. Numbers of prevented move-ons are monitored, with service providers reporting on numbers of service users who are ready to move-on but are unable due to lack of suitable accommodation available for them to move into (as at the end of each quarter).

Prevented Move-on

Quarter	Number of Prevented Move-ons as at end of Quarter
Q1 2016/17	12
Q2 2016/17	12
Q3 2016/17	26
Q4 2016/17	28

Quarter	Number of Prevented Move-ons as at end of Quarter
Q1 2017/18	9
Q2 2017/18	21
Q3 2017/18	23
Q4 2017/18	29

Quarter	Number of Prevented Move-ons as at end of Quarter
Q1 2018/19	28
Q2 2018/19	19
Q3 2018/19	24
Q4 2018/19	32

Quarter	Number of Prevented Move-ons as at end of Quarter
Q1 2019/20	30
Q2 2019/20	26
Q3 2019/20	27
Q4 2019/20	38

Although there are fluctuations in the numbers, on average incidences of prevented move-on are increasing as shown by the trend line (dotted line in the chart above) which visualises the general direction of the numbers.

Consultation with Providers and People in receipt of HSG Funded Services

It was the intention of the Housing Support Grants and Development Team to consult with stakeholders and service users in a variety of ways so as to achieve as full a representation of their views as possible. Circumstances have not allowed the planned engagement activities to take place. However, two questionnaires were issued with one aimed at stakeholders and one aimed at people in receipt of HSG funded services.

People who were in receipt of HSG funded services were asked:

- In which broad area of the Borough they resided

- The type of service that they were in receipt of

- The method of support and their experiences of support during the Covid-19 restrictions

- Their preferred type of support during Covid-19 restrictions and on the restrictions ending

- Whether they found it easy to get the support that they needed

- The activities/areas in which they received support and any areas where they needed
  support but their support provider was unable to offer this

- Anything that could be improved about the support they received

Stakeholders were asked for their opinions on:

- The gaps in current housing support and homelessness provision, locally in Wrexham and regionally in North Wales

- Priorities for the delivery of housing support, locally in Wrexham and regionally in North Wales

- How partnership working with HSG teams and stakeholders could be improved

A total of 185 completed questionnaires were received. 162 responses were received from people who were receiving HSG funded support, living in their own homes or in supported accommodation across Wrexham County Borough. 23 responses were received from stakeholders. A range of client groups, support services and stakeholder organisations were represented in the responses.

Responses from People in receipt of HSG Funded Services

In terms of gaps in services, some common themes were identified in the service user questionnaire responses. Understandably, a large proportion of the gaps and improvements identified by service users related to changes in the way that support was delivered during Covid-19 restrictions. Some common themes were:

- Anticipating a return to face to face support/home visits, or for some, meeting their support worker face to face for the first time. Some were not comfortable or were anxious about talking on the telephone. Home visits and face to face support being paused during Covid-19 restrictions had left some feeling isolated or lonely (38 responses).

- 15 respondents identified issues or anxiety around using technology as an alternative to face to face support including lack of knowledge, lacking an appropriate device, having a disability which makes using technology difficult. Some identified limitations of using technology in addressing some support needs.

- 6 responses indicated reduced accessibility, frequency and/or length of support sessions since Covid-19 restrictions.

- 3 respondents reported difficulties or delays or said that they needed help with accessing other services or support such as bereavement counselling, harm reduction, mental health services and support with employment/education/ volunteering opportunities.

- 5 respondents expressed concerns about the length of their support being limited to 2 years.

- Concerns regarding the prospect of securing appropriate move-on accommodation (4 responses).

Responses from Stakeholders

The most common themes from the stakeholder questionnaires were as follows:

- Lack of affordable, suitable accommodation/move-on accommodation (16 responses). Including barriers to accessing private rented sector accommodation including affordability and reluctance of private landlords to accept any housing benefits and specifically shortage of affordable, smaller 1 bedroom accommodation.

- Co-occurring/high/complex needs (raised by 10 respondents).

- Mental Health (raised by 8 respondents). Including more timely access to services and more supported accommodation, support for those with lower level mental health needs.

- Whole person, wraparound approach, service to individual, not individual to service (8 responses).

- Young People (7 responses). Including developing then range of supported/ temporary accommodation suitable for care leavers and younger vulnerable people (16-21).

- Intermediate or step down accommodation between supported and independent living (5 responses).

- Substance Misuse (5 responses).

- Domestic Abuse (3 responses).

- Including specialist support for BAME people.

- Support/links with education, employment, volunteering opportunities (3 responses).

There were a number of specific ideas and suggestions which will be explored further in the development of Wrexham's Housing Support Programme Strategy.

WCBC Housing Data

Data on reasons for refurbishments in WCBC Housing shows the number of tenancies which could be viewed as ending in a negative or unplanned way from April 2019 to March 2020.

WCBC Unplanned/Negative Tenancy Endings 2019/20

Reason for Negative/Unplanned Tenancy Endings	Number	%
Abandoned	3	5
Eviction Anti-Social Behaviour	3	5
Eviction other tenancy breach	11	20
Eviction Rent Arrears	22	39
Keys Returned No Notice	8	14
Taken Into Custody	9	16
Total Number of Negative/Unplanned	56	-

As can be seen in the chart above, a large proportion of these 'negative' tenancy endings were due to rent arrears however a significant number were due to the tenant being taken into custody.

Numbers of WCBC tenancies in rent arrears of over £1000 at end of month. Trend line shows a steady increase in incidences of tenancies in rent arrears of over £1000.

WCBC Tenancies with Rent Arrears over £1000

End of Month	Number of Tenancies with Rent Arrears over £1000
April-18	138
May-18	156
June-18	195
July-18	239
August-18	261
September-18	304
October-18	321
November-18	332
December-18	343
January-19	223
February-19	254
March-19	213
April-19	260
May-19	295
June-19	346
July-19	373
August-19	392
September-19	335
October-19	331
November-19	342
December-19	495
January-20	312
February-20	326
March-20	305
April-20	355
May-20	503
June-20	594
July-20	600
August-20	523
September-20	520
October-20	506

Homelessness Statistics

Numbers of households housed in temporary accommodation by household type

Week Commencing	Single People	Couples	Families	Totals
Week 1 - 23 Mar	55	2	43	100
Week 5 - 27 Apr	108	6	55	169
Week 7 - 15 May	132	6	56	195
Week 9 - 29 May	153	6	56	215
Week 11 - 12 Jun	189	6	58	253
Week 13 - 26 Jun	201	8	61	273
Week 15 - 10 Jul	211	9	63	283
Week 17 - 24 Jul	219	9	63	291
Week 19 - 7 Aug	233	9	65	307
Week 21 - 21 Aug	244	11	69	324

Households housing in temporary accommodation are increasing, particularly in the single person category. Numbers of households housed in temporary accommodation was 117 at end of June 2019 in comparison with 273 at end of June 2020.

Annex 1: Impact Assessments

Impact Assessment Summary

Equality Impact Assessment

The HSG Delivery Plan will have a positive effect on the delivery of functions to all groups by enabling the best use of HSG funding resources to be made to address identified levels of need for support services.

The Plan will be developed with due regard to WCBC's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024.

The Plan will advance equality of opportunity for all groups by supporting the commissioning of services that will support people to access housing, training and employment, achieve their potential and have positive engagement in the community.

The Plan will support strong and inclusive communities by promoting positive community engagement.

Welsh Language Assessment

The HSG Delivery Plan does not demonstrate a direct link with the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language Cymraeg 2050 A million Welsh speakers, and the related Work Programme for 2017-2021. However, all HSG commissioned services will be required to comply with WCBC's Welsh Language Standards, and this will be integral to all HSG service contracts.

While the Plan will not impact directly on the Welsh language, all HSG commissioned services will have a contractual obligation to comply with WCBC's Welsh Language Standards; and will, as a minimum:

- Record the preferred language of the Service User

- Endeavour to provide all or part of the Service in the preferred language of the Service User

- Ensure that information, literature, forms and Service Delivery Plan provided to Service users, is bilingual;

- Ensure that services delivered in Welsh are not inferior to services delivered in English.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)

With the exception of some schemes that offer support to young people aged 16-17, HSG services do not provide direct support to children.

The Process Flowcharts in the WG Children's Rights Scheme 2014 do not appear to indicate the need to carry out a formal CRIA in respect of the HSG Delivery Plan.

By seeking to secure "A Wales where nobody is homeless and everyone has a safe home where they can flourish and live a fulfilled, active and independent life", HSG and the HSG Delivery Plan will have a beneficial impact on the rights and quality of life of children living in households supported by HSG commissioned services.

Annex 2: Local Commissioning Plan

This section provides an overview of WCBC's recommendations for commissioning, remodelling and decommissioning of HSG services for the financial year 2021-22. Along with the Local Spend Plan.

The Local Commissioning Plan (LCP) outlines the need for services funded through Housing Support Grant (HSG) which prevent people from becoming homeless, stabilise their housing situation or help homeless or potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.

The following priorities or recommendations have been developed to address our HSG Delivery Priority and to begin to investigate and address the potential gaps in services identified in the Needs Assessment.

Mental Health

Evidence Summary

After Homeless/Potentially Homeless, mental health was the most prevalent overall support need of people referred to the Housing Support Gateway. 16% of referrals had support needs around mental health, over 10% stated that their primary support need was mental health.

Gaps in provision and/or difficulties in accessing mental health support was mentioned in just over a third of the responses to the stakeholder questionnaire.

Supporting People outcomes returns for clients show that the most prevalent need at the start of support was mental health with this being a relevant support need for almost a third of clients at the start of their support.

Priorities

Establish where there may be gaps in mental health provision and options for addressing them.

Look at piloting services in order to establish need and test models of support for addressing gaps in existing provision.

More units of support in general to be made available in order to support increased numbers of people housed temporarily to secure and retain settled accommodation.

Evidence Summary

Incidences of WCBC tenancies in rent arrears in excess of £1000 are increasing and it is assumed that there is a similar pattern in other tenures.

Numbers of households placed in temporary homeless accommodation are increasing.

End on 'evictions ban' and expected corresponding increase in homeless presentations and referrals to the Housing Support Gateway.

Consultation questionnaire responses from stakeholders indicate a shortage of support in general and a number of specific suggestions were made regarding where the gaps in provision lie.

Priorities

Following successful implementation of new external generic floating support scheme, continue to re-model and further develop WCBC provided generic floating support provision.

Develop and agree a HSG funding package for support in temporary accommodation homeless.

Consider additional resource for Housing Support Gateway in order to ensure that there is sufficient capacity and an IT solution in place to deal with an increase in referrals and to facilitate more accurate gathering of information on housing support needs.

Follow up on suggestions made by stakeholders regarding gaps in current supply of HSG funded support and supported accommodation services. Gather further needs information regarding service suggestions. This could include piloting projects where appropriate and exploring opportunities for regional or sub-regional projects.

Co-occurring and 'Complex' Needs and Longer Term Support

Evidence Summary

10 out of 23 responses to the stakeholder consultation questionnaires indicated service gaps for those with co-occurring or complex needs.

5 respondents to the service user consultation questionnaire expressed concerns about the length of their support being limited to 2 years.

Anecdotal evidence regarding repeat presentations for homelessness and or housing/ support.

Priorities

Carry out further analysis of Housing Support Gateway and Homelessness Data, including evictions and failed placements in supported accommodation, to assess the extent of the issue of repeat presentations.

Consider models of support and supported accommodation for people with dual diagnosis, complex needs and/or who require longer term support. This is likely to be a longer term piece of work carried over into the Housing Support Programme Strategy due to complexities, e.g. around sourcing accommodation.

Criminal Justice

Evidence Summary

A significant number of WCBC 'negative tenancy ends' were due to the tenant being taken into custody.

Issues around Offending/Criminal Justice was the second most common further support need of people referred to the Housing Support Gateway.

Priorities

Implementation of new re-modelled supported accommodation and floating support service for people with substance misuse needs relating to drugs and / or alcohol, with dedicated provision for people who have criminal offending behaviours in addition to substance misuse issues.

Service based within the Housing Options team offering support to prison leavers.

Substance Misuse

Evidence Summary

22% of responses to the stakeholder questionnaire mentioned some type of need or gap relating to substance misuse services.

Priorities

Implementation of new re-modelled supported accommodation and floating support service for people with substance misuse needs relating to drugs and / or alcohol, with dedicated provision for people who have criminal offending behaviours in addition to substance misuse issues.

Move-on from Supported and Temporary Accommodation

Evidence Summary

Securing suitable move-on accommodation was a recurring theme across both service user and stakeholder consultation questionnaire responses.

Quarterly data returns from HSG service providers indicate that incidences of prevented move-on from supported accommodation are increasing.

Priorities

Consider additional resource for Housing Support Gateway in order to ensure that there is the capacity to gather accurate and timely needs data and to monitor prevented move-on from supported accommodation.

Continue to work with partners and service providers to maximise move-on opportunities for supported individuals, e.g. through supporting people into employment by encouraging links with employment support services such as Communities for Work.

Explore feasibility of developing a move-on panel drawing on good practice in other North Wales Local Authorities.

Consider further resources for WCBC's Local Lettings Agency with the aim of increasing the supply and quality of accommodation in the private rented sector which is available and affordable to people leaving temporary and supported accommodation.

Young People

Evidence Summary

'Young Person' was one of the most common support needs of people referred to the Housing Support Gateway.

Supporting People outcomes returns for clients show that the most frequently occurring primary client support category at the start of support was Young Person.

7 respondents to the stakeholder consultation questionnaire suggested that we should be considering our service provision for young people and in particular, tenancy readiness and the range of supported/temporary accommodation suitable for care leavers and the most vulnerable young people.

Priorities

Follow up on suggestions made by stakeholders regarding gaps in current supply of HSG funded services. Gather further needs information regarding service suggestions, particularly in relation to care leavers and the most vulnerable young people.

Domestic Abuse

Evidence Summary

Responses to stakeholder consultation questionnaires indicated gaps in domestic abuse service provision and a number of specific service gaps were suggested.

Priorities

To carry out further research and consultation with stakeholders to identify potential gaps in services.

Explore opportunities for regional or sub-regional projects where appropriate.

Annex 3: Homelessness Statutory Duties

The LA are currently reviewing and monitoring resources due to the increase workload and pressures as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Staffing has been increased until the end of this financial year in order to discharge the statutory duty. The removal of the priority need categories has meant an increase in presentations and duties under s68 and s73. It is clear that these resources will need to be maintained into the new financial year and we are currently reviewing budgets to ascertain how this can be managed.

Processes and service delivery models are being reviewed in order to streamline services making them more effective. Currently under review are s85 reviews and s62 assessments.

Housing Options officers are specialising where appropriate, working with particular cohorts and gaining expertise in particular fields and strengthening partnerships with outside agencies, i.e. rough sleeping specialism, refugee leaving NASS accommodation specialisms.

The LA have funded and procured a 19 bedroom B & B which will be transformed and utilised as a triage/hub for homeless/rough sleepers. This model is reflected in the phase 2 guidance issued by Welsh Government earlier this year and aims to replicate the success the LA had at the Glyndwr project during the summer. Homeless individuals will be supported and assisted in order to move on into suitable and secure accommodation. A Housing Options officer will be based permanently in this setting along with support agencies.

From 1 April 2020 to 1 December 2020 there were 828 presentations in total.