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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

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Ein cyf / Our ref:
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Dyddiad/Date: Dydd Mercher, 4 Rhagfyr 2024

Annwyl Cyngorydd,

CABINET

Cynhelir Cyfarfod Cabinet Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB ar **Dydd Mawrth, 10 Rhagfyr 2024** am **14:30**.

AGENDA

- Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb
Derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb gan Aelodau.
- Datganiadau o fuddiant
Derbyn datganiadau o ddiddordeb personol a rhagfarnol (os o gwbl) gan Aelodau / Swyddogion yn unol â darpariaethau'r Cod Ymddygiad Aelodau a fabwysiadwyd gan y Cyngor o 1 Medi 2008.
- Adroddiad Diogelu Corfforaethol Blynyddol 2023/24 3 - 28
- Trefniadau Derbyn Ysgolion Cydlynol 2027-2028 29 - 66
- Prosiectau Trafnidiaeth Strategol 67 - 108
- Polisi Gweithio Hyblyg 109 - 120

7 Adroddiad Gwybodaeth i'w Nodi

121 - 158

8 Materion Brys

I ystyried unrhyw eitemau o fusnes y, oherwydd amgylchiadau arbennig y cadeirydd o'r farn y dylid eu hystyried yn y cyfarfod fel mater o frys yn unol â pharagraff 2.4 (e) o'r Rheolau Trefn y Cabinet yn y Cyfansoddiad.

9 Gwahardd y Cyhoedd

Nid oedd yr eitem canlynol yn cael eu cyhoeddi, gan fod eu bod yn cynnwys gwybodaeth eithriedig fel y'i diffinnir ym Mharagraffau 12 a 13, 12A Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972, fel y'i newidiwyd gan Orchymyn Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru) 2007 (Mynediad at Wybodaeth) (Amrywio).

Os, yn dilyn cymhwyso'r prawf budd y cyhoedd yn y Cabinet yn penderfynu yn unol â'r Ddeddf i ystyried yr eitem hyn yn breifat, bydd y cyhoedd yn cael eu gwahardd o'r cyfarfod yn ystod ystyriaeth o'r fath.

10 Prynu Eiddo Gwag Problemus Hirdymor yn Orfodol

159 - 216

Nodyn: Bydd hwn yn gyfarfod Hybrid a bydd Aelodau a Swyddogion mynychu trwy Siambr y Cyngor, Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / o bell Trwy Timau Microsoft. Bydd y cyfarfod cael ei recordio i'w drosglwyddo drwy wefan y Cyngor. Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiwn am hyn, cysylltwch â cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159

Yn ddiffuant

K Watson

Prif Swyddog, Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddio, AD a Pholisi Corfforaethol

Dosbarthiad:

Cynghorwr:

E L P Caparros

P Davies

M J Evans

N Farr

J Gebbie

M Jones

JC Spanswick

HM Williams

Agenda Item 3

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2023/24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JOE BOYLE POLICY OFFICER SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report provides details of the corporate safeguarding activity undertaken for the year 2023-24 including data on the number of safeguarding referrals to both adults and children's services. It outlines the way in which Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC) directorates have worked to safeguard its citizens along with information on future planned work.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report for 2023-24 for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It is a corporate responsibility for BCBC to safeguard vulnerable individuals from harm, abuse, and neglect.
- 2.2 Section 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, refers to safeguarding and created legislation against which the Council is required to function regarding safeguarding. It provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report attached as **Appendix 1** provides details as to how the Council has performed against those statutory duties.

3. Current situation/ proposal

3.1 The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report includes details on:

- Adults Social Care
- Children and Family Services
- Education, Early Years and Young People
- Workforce
- Housing
- Partnership and Community Safety and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- Placement Sufficiency, Out of County Placements and Operating Without Registration (OWRs)
- Other areas of key focus

3.2 The report highlights the changes to both Adults and Children and Family Services operating models and restructures that have been completed. Referrals continued to be high across both services, which resulted in continued high levels of caseloads pressures placed upon social work teams. However, this increased demand continued to be processed and managed successfully within compliance targets.

3.3 The report details information regarding the number of safeguarding referrals made to both adults and children's teams, including those where thresholds were not met. It provides information relating to the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) that have been applied for, as well as detailing information regarding children that have been required to be deprived of their liberty. This can be for a number of reasons such as if they are in a residential setting requiring high staff ratios or if they are unable to access the community without constant supervision.

3.4 Provided in the report is information as to how many children have been placed on the Child Protection Register (CPR) throughout this time period, as well as providing information relating to how Public Law Outline (PLO) and Care Proceedings (CP) have been processed and supported.

3.5 The report contains details relating to concerns held by the Education, Early Years and Youth Services directorate relating to increasing rates of both Permanent and Fixed Term exclusions from schools, along with details of the number of children and young people that are Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) and Electively Home Educated (EHE).

3.6 The report provides information relating to the new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process being followed in relation to DBS renewals and how Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR/OD) continue to provide workforce information to the Corporate Safeguarding Board, including data on training completion rates.

3.7 The report highlights the leveling off of numbers of people living in temporary accommodation, and where work has been completed to cross reference these individuals with the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate.

- 3.8 The report contains information relating to work completed by the Community Safety Partnership, including about the Assia Domestic Abuse service achieving the “Leading Lights” accreditation, making it the only council-led provision in Wales to hold this standard.
- 3.9 Details of placement sufficiency, out of county placements and placements operating without registration are contained and discussed within the report as well as details relating to the work undertaken to support reductions and interventions for child exploitation.
- 3.10 The draft report was presented to the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 on 14th November 2024 for comment and consideration. For future Corporate Safeguarding Reports, the SOSC requested that comparable data be included from neighbouring local authorities in order to provide the picture as to how Bridgend is performing on a national scale.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report,

Involvement	In the formation of this report, relevant officers from the Corporate Safeguarding Board, which is formed of officers and representatives from across the Council’s directorates, have contributed to the final version.
Long term	This Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report provides an overview of the safeguarding activity from the previous year. This allows the Council to project what future safeguarding activity and requirements may be required of the Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB) Directorate and thus provide additional safety to our most vulnerable individuals in Bridgend.
Prevention	The report highlights developments by the Directorate in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. These developments help the Council improve its

	safeguarding processes and responses to safeguarding matters and thus preventing the likelihood of additional harm coming to vulnerable individuals.
Integration	Safeguarding is a mandatory corporate training module for all to complete and to integrate the learning and understanding across the Council.
Collaboration	Work continues in collaboration with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTMSB), as well as multi-agency working with South Wales Police, social landlords, health colleagues, and the third sector.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 Details provided within the Annual Report on how staff are supported and continue to improve and strengthen safeguarding arrangements is a key theme throughout the Annual Report and remains a key priority for 2024/25. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all Council Directorates. With a view to promoting awareness of this and raising the profile of Safeguarding across the whole of the Council.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this report, the medium- and long-term sustainability of statutory services provided by the Council continue to present growing challenges on the Council to meet these responsibilities and deliver a balanced budget.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the 2023-24 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.

Background documents

None

Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

www.bridgend.gov.uk



Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report

2023-2024

1. Introduction and Background

The purpose of this report is to provide information relating to Bridgend County Borough Council's (the Council) performance regarding safeguarding vulnerable individuals across the services provided by the Council's directorates. This report sets out how each area has been performing regarding the following areas:

- Adults Safeguarding
- Safeguarding children
- Education safeguarding
- Workforce
- Housing
- Partnership and Community Safety and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- Placement Sufficiency, Out of County Placements and Operating Without Registration (OWRs)
- Other areas of key focus
- Priority Areas for future focus and development

Safeguarding all remains a key priority of all services provided by the Council with the focus being put on ensuring and protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, whilst enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Following the implementation of Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014) (SSWBA), sets out responsibilities for Local Authorities and relevant partner agencies to work together to safeguard vulnerable individuals at risk. The Council forms a part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTMRBSB). For more details on the activity of CTMRBSB, it's annual report can be found [here](#).

This report has been prepared through contributions from relevant members of the council's Corporate Safeguarding Board (CSB). The CSB meets on a monthly basis, is chaired by the Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing, and consists of officers representing service areas from the following areas:

- Adults Services
- Children and Family Services
- Education, Early Years and Young People's Services
- Workforce and Human Resources
- Housing
- Partnership and Community Safety and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- Employability
- Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) team

The Council's CSB is responsible for ensuring the compliance of all directorates with key safeguarding requirements in relation to vulnerable individuals, agreeing and implementing clear actions for the group within the annual action plan, ensuring effective cross directorate safeguarding practice, and monitoring corporate safeguarding measures. The board advises the Cabinet Corporate Management

Board (CCMB) and recommends relevant action in relation to corporate safeguarding standards and policy. At the monthly meeting, the CSB Dashboard is reviewed and discussed, which is then presented to CCMB at their following meeting by the Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing.

2. Adults Safeguarding

Across this past year a significant piece of work has been completed regarding the future operating model of Adults Social Care which has resulted in a new three tier model of practice including the new Early Intervention and Prevention Hub (EIPH) front door. The function of this new front door team is as follows:

- Respond to unknown individuals from the 'ASC front door' or hospital setting
- Combines the functions of the Common Access Point (CAP) and the Short Term Social Work Team (STSWT), with the functions of the Community Support Workers and Social Work Assistants from EIPT
- The Intensive Support Service will be based within the Early Intervention and Prevention Hub
- The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) will consist of Social Work Practitioners, Nurse, an Occupational Therapist response, links with Local Community Connectors and representation from Tu-veda and the Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO).
- As per Adult Social Care Practice Model, all practitioners in the hub will deliver highly **strengths-based, outcome focused** practice
- There will be a focus on maximizing community assets and preventative approaches to avoid early entry in to the higher, specialist tiers, 2 and 3
- To ensure flow, individuals are assessed and supported within no longer than 12 weeks, after which individuals will be transferred to the next tier of the model or closed due to the ethos of the hub successfully managing any escalation in needs.

Within this new front door Early Intervention and Prevention Hub team, a new screening and consultation process has been identified in order to identify and appropriately support referrals into Adults Services in order to make the best and correct decision regarding any safeguarding concerns and reports of an adult at risk. Processes have been identified to support the team in dealing with email consultations, Adult at Risk reports, Professional Concerns, requests for checks to be completed, and telephone contacts for consultation appropriately.

The SSWBA places a duty on all to report an "adult at risk". Local Authorities must make enquiries where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a person within its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) is an adult at risk. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect the Local Authority has a duty to undertake section 126 safeguarding enquiries. These should be completed within seven days and enquiries should be made to determine what actions may be required to support the adult at risk and any ongoing protection planning that may be required.

These enquiries should be person centred and ensure that the adult is consulted and spoken with to determine their understanding of the situation and any support needs they may have as well as considering potential risks. The duties placed on the Local Authority by the SSWBA, have resulted in a significant increase in the number of safeguarding enquiries being undertaken. This has resulted in increased numbers of citizens coming to the attention of Social Services.

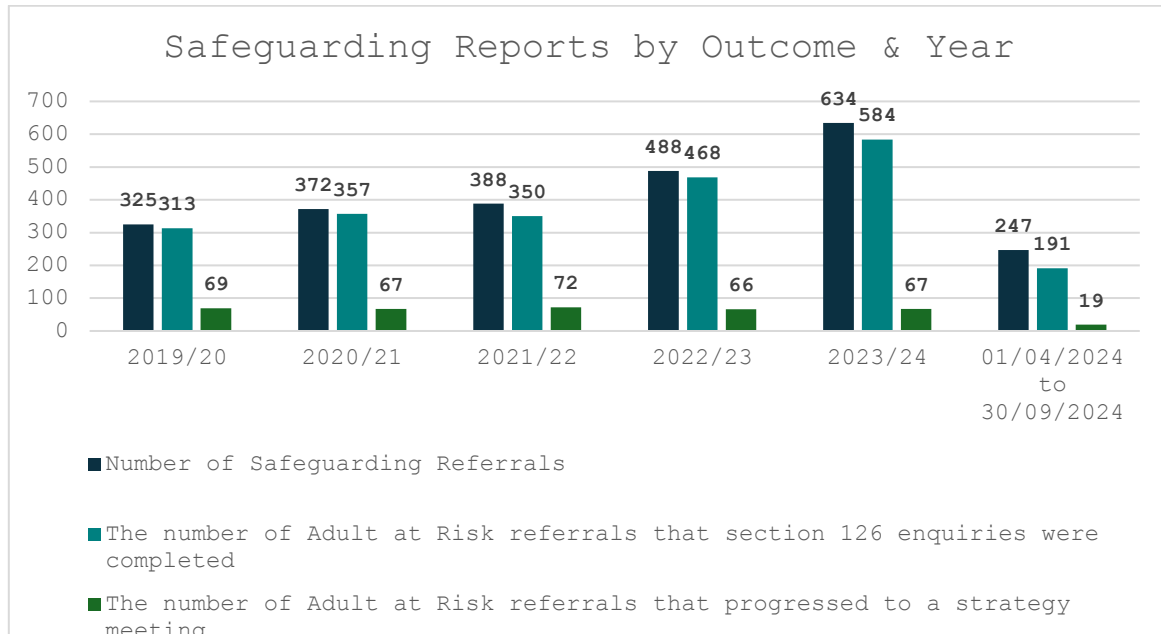
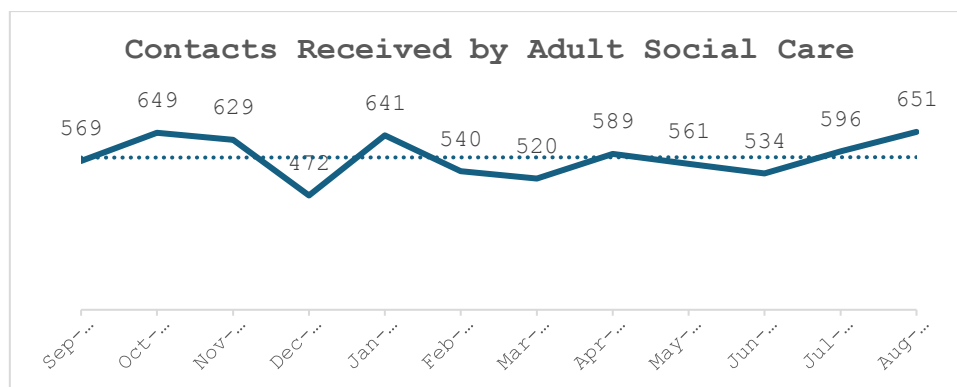
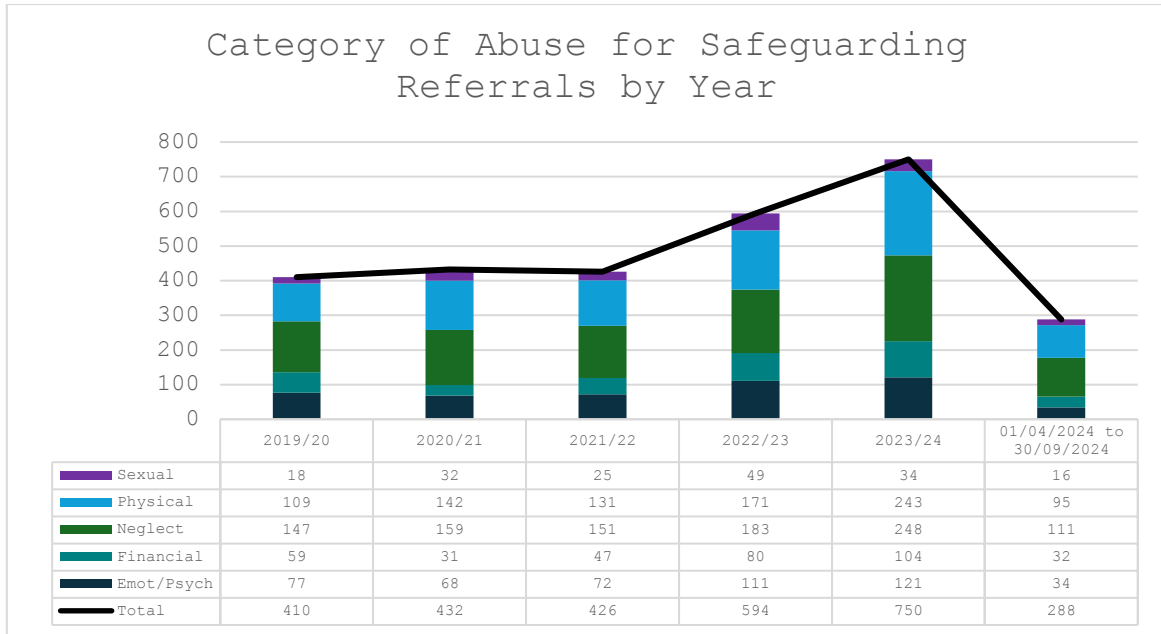


Table 1, above, shows comparative data from the previous 5 years involving the number of safeguarding referrals received, as well as the number of referrals that progressed through the relevant stages, demonstrating the continued increase in numbers of contacts and subsequent enquiries that have been completed.

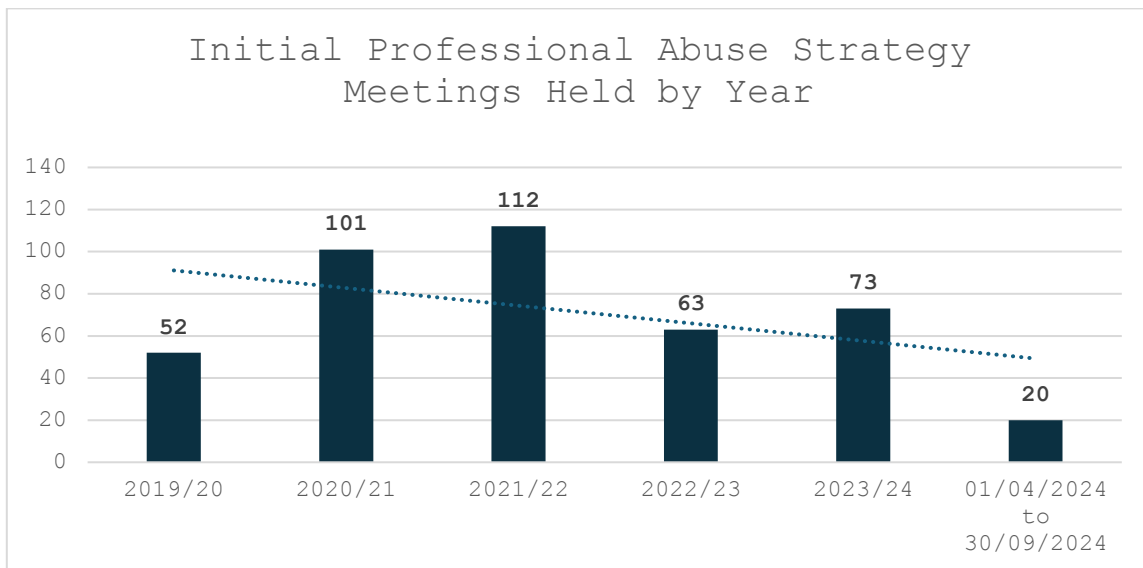
Although the total number of safeguarding referrals across adults' services has been on the increase since the implementation of the act, across this past year, the total number of referrals received by adults services has remained at a consistent level across the year as can be seen from the below graph.



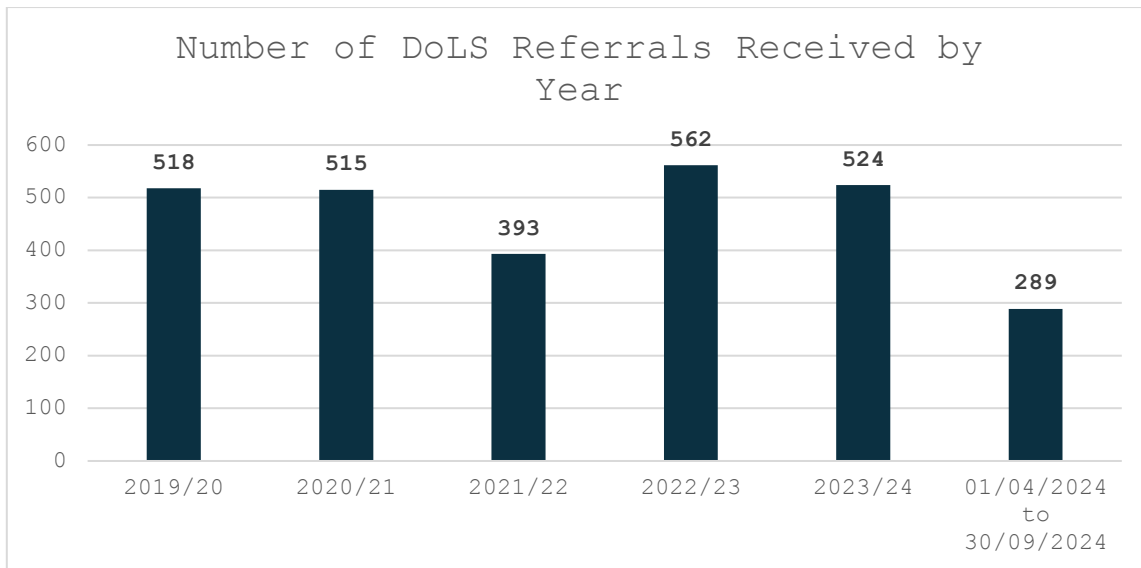
The following chart provides a breakdown of the category of abuse for Adults Safeguarding Referrals by year, showing that Neglect and Physical Abuse are consistently the highest categories for referral.



The number of Initial Professional Abuse strategy meetings held in Adult's Services continues to show a downward trend and reduction in numbers over the past 5 years as can be seen from the following graph. This is in spite of a slight increase in strategy meetings from the previous year. To date, there have been 20 strategy meetings held for professionals this year.



Court of Protection Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) referrals across Adults Services have remained at a relatively consistent level in comparison to the previous 5 years.



3. Safeguarding children

A significant piece of work has been undertaken within this area of the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate which has incorporated the integration of Edge of Care and Early Help services into Children’s Social Care as part of the future operating model for Children’s services and leading to the creation of the Children and Family Services division. The Council initiated an improvement programme for Children’s Services in February 2022 following the declaration of a critical incident in which the Council was highly challenged in meeting statutory duties to safeguard and protect children at risk of harm. To develop the sustainable operating model, the Corporate Management Board (CMB) commissioned a detailed review of the evidence base for effectively supporting children and families who, if there is not effective preventative intervention, will require statutory children’s services involvement; best practice across Wales; and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data on the current arrangements in Bridgend. The review reported to CMB and the Council’s Improvement Board. Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB), CMB, and the Improvement Board, accepted the findings of the review and the evidence base and analysis has been used to support the development of a three-year strategic plan ‘Think Family, Sustainably Improving Outcomes for Children and Families’, which received Cabinet and Council approval in September 2023. The strategic plan is now the policy of the Council and commits the Council to introducing new proposed arrangements for an integrated IAA, early help, locality social work, locality early intervention and edge of care teams’ service. Consultation was conducted on Early Help and Edge of Care and concluded in April 2024 with operational restructures taking place on 1 July 2024 with both service areas moving from Education, Early Years and Young People directorate to the newly formed Children and Family Services. It is anticipated and expected that by bringing the Edge of Care and Early Help services into the directorate, this will create a more streamlined, smoother and improved experience for those families supported by services who are required to be stepped up or stepped down to and from early help support. The continued implementation of this operating model between preventative

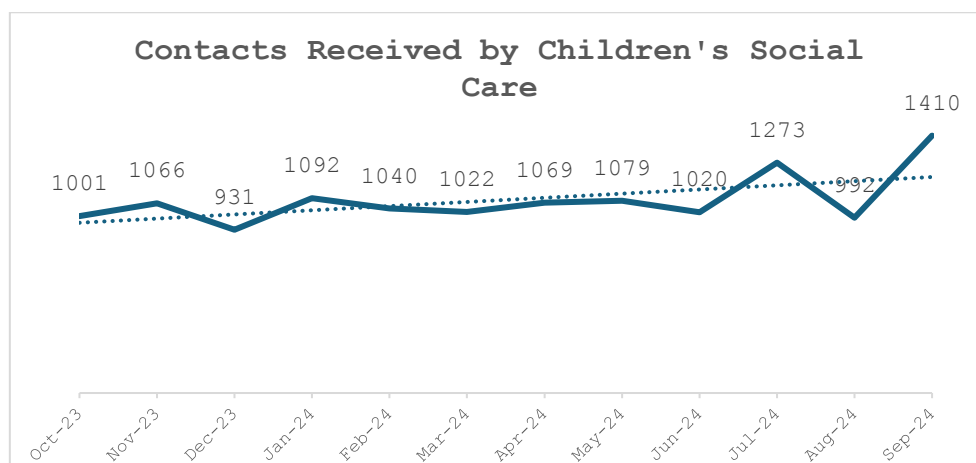
and statutory services to provide an integrated service, where more children and families with complexity of need are supported preventatively, and where families are motivated and consent to change, remains a priority area for action.

In addition to this, over the past year, work has been undertaken that has resulted in a fourth Locality Safeguarding Hub being created in Children and Family Services. Initially the team formed part of the East Locality Hub taking on work related to Public Law Outline, and child exploitation cases, where its remit was then expanded to match the case allocation across the East Locality Hub. This team has since been renamed the Central Hub and will focus on the Bridgend Town area and thus creating more capacity across the East Locality team.

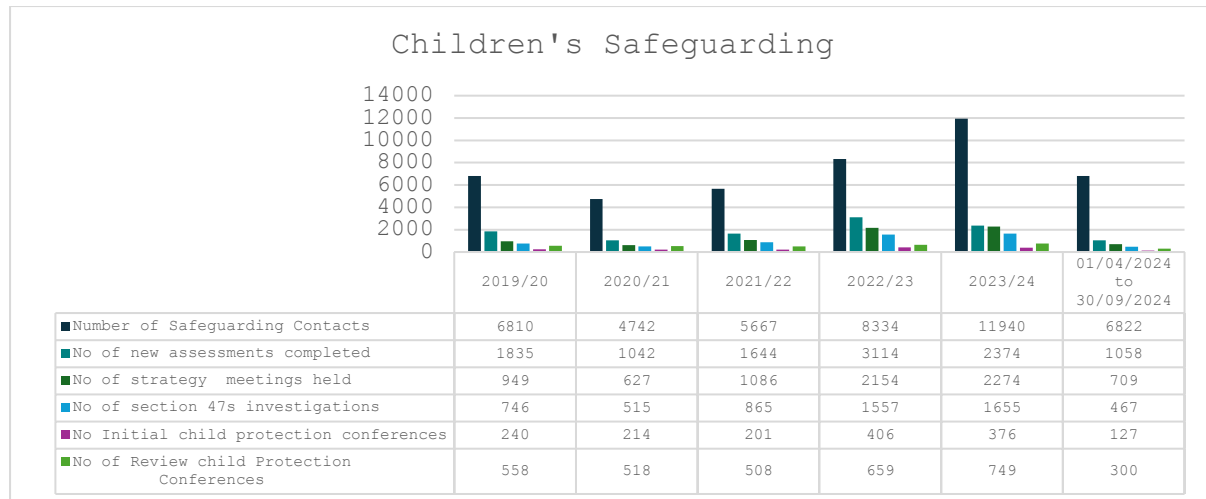
The continued implementation of the Signs of Safety practice model has had a significant impact on how partners work with families and assess risk. The strength-based model places greater emphasis on identifying areas of risks, strengths and protective factors but also seeks to identify what resources there are within the family to resolve their difficulties.

Implementing this model at the front door enables us to ask the right questions following a referral and this has supported the reduction of cases progressing to strategy meetings and potential subsequent child protection registration. It slows down thinking and enables further information gathering to mitigate risks. However, where risks cannot be mitigated, the model utilises the existing strengths within the family, and hones in on what needs to change, enabling better evidence of sustained change. This results in families receiving the right intervention, at the right time and for the appropriate length of time. As a result of this our numbers of children subject to the Child Protection Registration has reduced as have our numbers of Care Experienced children.

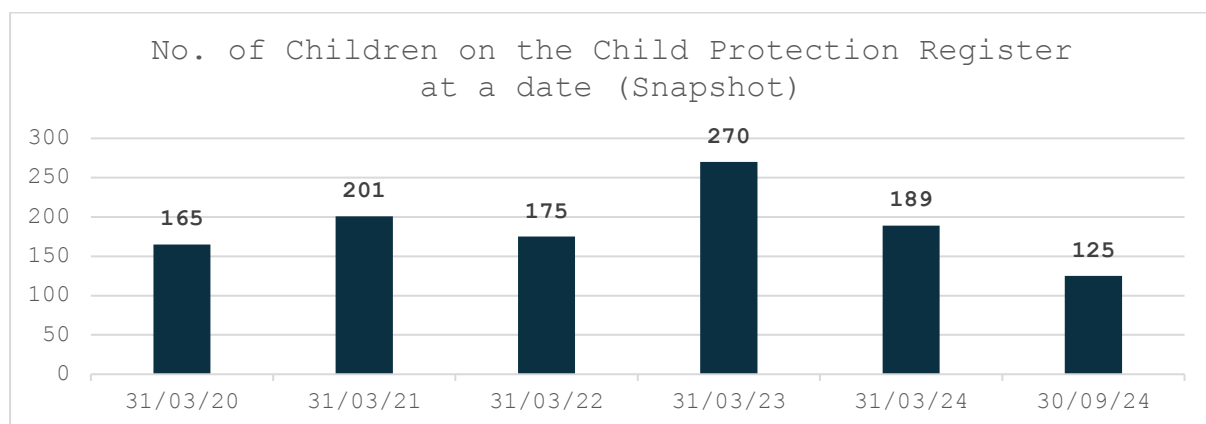
Contacts received to Children and Family Services over the past 12 months have fluctuated in line with school holidays. August 2024 shows a 6.7% decrease in the level of contacts when compared to July 2023. Contacts in July 2024 are the highest over the 12 month period, with the highest referrer being Police. However as can be seen from the below graph, the average number of contacts across the past year has remained fairly stable and consistent.



A breakdown of the total contacts received by Children and Family Services can be seen in the table and graph below showing the comparative data from the past 5 years for the number of contacts received, assessments completed, strategy meetings held, section 47 enquiries undertaken, number of initial child protection conferences and number of child protection review conferences held.



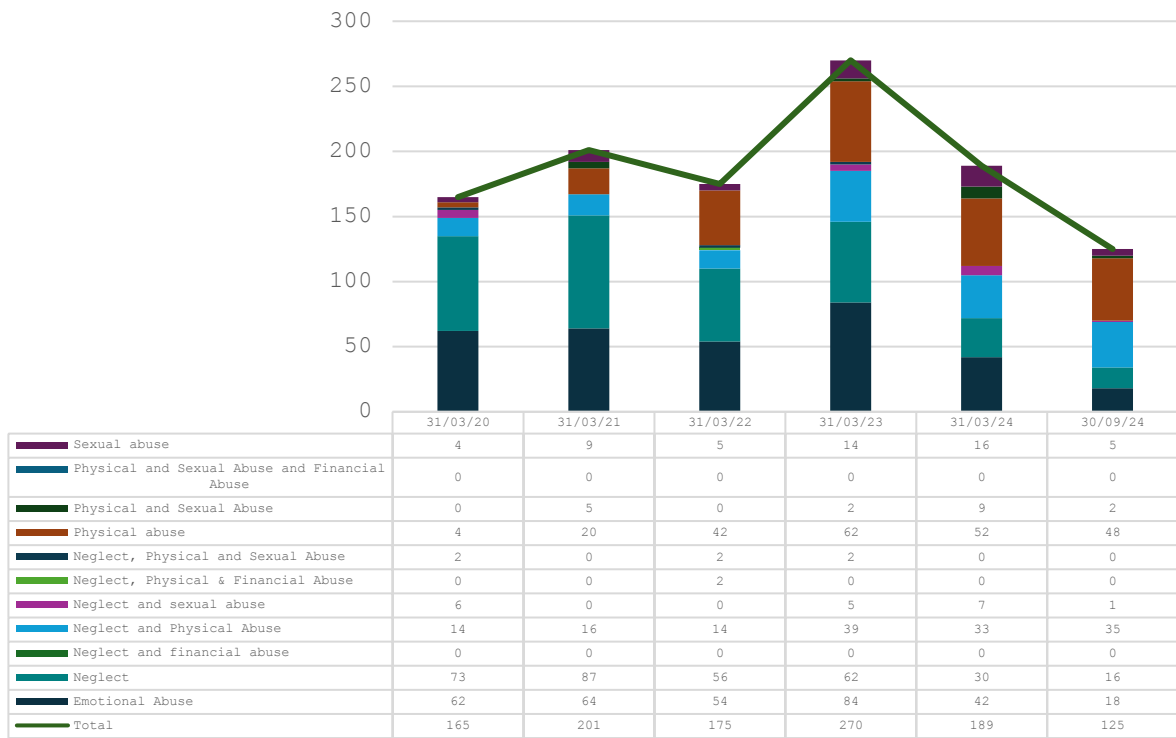
At the start of 2023, Children and Family Services were experiencing a significant increase in children being made subject to the Child Protection Register (CPR), however, following targeted work and a more stable workforce in the Safeguarding Hubs, a steady reduction in these numbers can be evidenced from the following graph.



An Independent audit has been commissioned to look at numbers of children becoming looked after with future findings and actions to be identified and acted upon.

The following chart provides a breakdown of the reasons for registration on the Child Protection register by category, where across the past year physical abuse has been the primary reason for the registration with neglect and physical abuse the second most prevalent category.

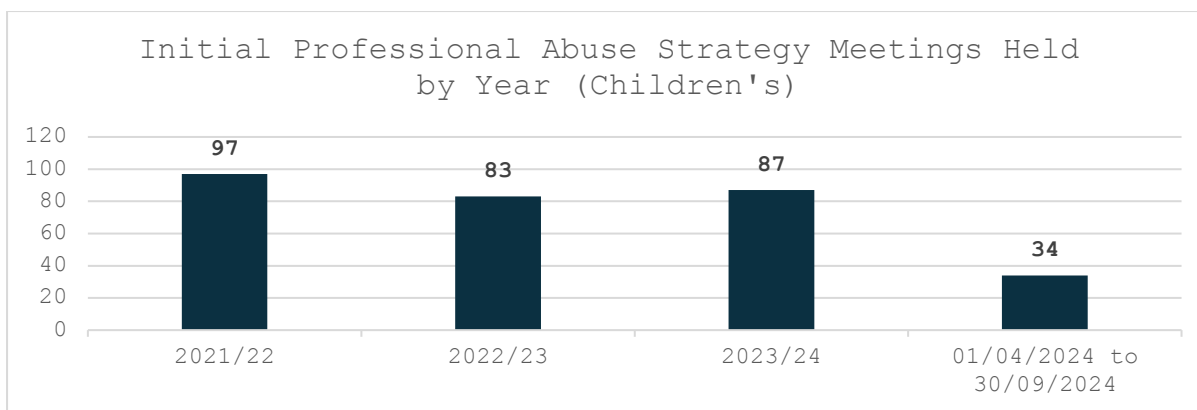
Number of Children on the Child Protection Register
by Category of Abuse
as at a date (Snapshot)



The following table provides a breakdown of the numbers of children and young people registered on the Child Protection Register by age and by category of abuse.

Category of Abuse	Age Group					Total
	Under 1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16-18	
Emotional Abuse	0	3	7	8	0	18
Neglect	0	2	2	9	3	16
Neglect and Physical Abuse	5	7	10	12	1	35
Neglect and Sexual Abuse	0	0	0	1	0	1
Physical abuse	4	11	11	20	2	48
Physical and Sexual Abuse	0	0	0	2	0	2
Sexual Abuse	0	1	3	1	0	5
Total	9	24	33	53	6	125

Across the past year, there were 87 Professional Abuse Strategy meetings held as shown by the below graph, which is consistent with previous years, however there remains no current identifiable pattern due to monthly referral fluctuations. To date there have been 34 Professional Abuse Strategy meetings conducted for this financial year. Professionals across education remain the dominant profession to see referrals from.



The table below sets out the current position for this year's number of Children's Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) referrals that have been made. As can be seen from the comparative data from this time last year, this is a significant reduction in number of applications made. Data is not currently available for a 5-year trend analysis.

	01/03/23 to 30/09/23	01/04/2024 to 30/09/2024
Number of DoLS Referrals Received	8	2

The Council remains committed to providing a coordinated, multi-agency response to children, young people and vulnerable adults who are currently at risk, or likely to be at risk of, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, County Lines activity and gang affiliation.

To progress the multi-agency management of exploitation a panel has been established. The panels have been ongoing since May 2023 with the first full panel taking place in June 2023. The impact of the exploitation screening tools and multi-agency collaboration is already evident. Two senior social workers have been appointed to lead on exploitation within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) and the Locality Teams. The safeguarding exploitation senior social workers undertake a range of safety mapping tasks as well as developing the relationships between the multi-agency partners and in particular the development of the missing protocol and continues to support frontline practitioners in completing the exploitation screening tools.

Since June 2023, there have been 85 people discussed at the Exploitation Prevention Panels and the panels have taken place monthly, apart from January 2024, June 2024 and September 2024.

The multi-agency response panel consists of partnership agency attendees from:

- Police
- Youth Justice Service
- CAMHS
- Education Engagement Team
- Schools

- School Health Nurse
- Choices Programme
- Independent Child Trafficking Service
- BAROD
- Community Partnership Team
- Adult Services
- Health and Wellbeing Team
- Housing

A Senior Social Work Practitioner for Exploitation has been in post since July 2023 and who chairs the majority of strategy meetings regarding cases of exploitation in order to promote consistency of approach. Termly meetings are held with the heads/safeguarding leads of the local comprehensive schools in relation to exploitation and mapping of young people, these meetings allow comprehensive schools to raise concerns around children they feel are vulnerable to exploitation and it aids in linking peer groups/associations across the Bridgend area. It also allows schools to be aware of the ongoing issues in the area, any persons of concerns, emerging themes of locations of concern. Weekly meetings are held with Police colleagues focussing on missing persons so that any shared intelligence/concerns can be discussed. Representatives from Children and Family services were involved in a British Transport Police (BTP) operation that took place across South Wales in April 2024 targeting County Lines operations. Bridgend Children's Services were present with BTP at relevant train stations across South Wales. A further Police Operation is being undertaken in December which Children and Family Services will also be supporting. The Senior Social Work Practitioner has currently attended 2 Primary Federation of Headteachers meetings to provide education around Exploitation and County Lines, been part of the steering group for Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board to assist in creating regional policy/assessments in relation to Child Exploitation, and is currently part of a Steering Group for Children and Young People who are reported missing from home or care. This Steering Group is part of the Welsh Government approach to tackle concerns around missing children.

Work continues to be completed to ensure and monitor the safety of vulnerable individuals to exploitation.

4. Education, Early Years and Youth Services

This year, the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate has experienced similar patterns of challenges as in the previous year.

The past school year has seen the highest number of permanent exclusions the Directorate has ever experienced. The following table shows the trend of permanent exclusions across the past five years. Please note data is not available for 2019-2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23	2023-24	2024 up until 30/9/2024
Primary Schools	1	0	1	7	0
Secondary Schools	7	9	13	23	3
Special Schools	0	0	1	0	1

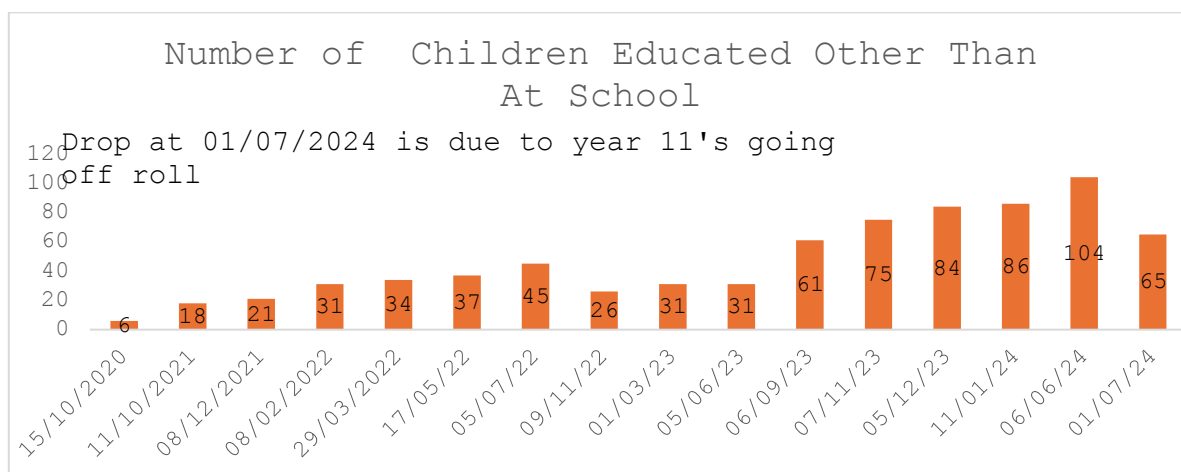
This trend that has continued into the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, where there have already been four permanent exclusions. An examination of permanent exclusions from the last school year has concluded that they are all justified and reasonable. However, schools are dealing with complex situations in ever-increasing numbers and severity. The Directorate's focus is on what is happening in schools to manage situations before they become so complex.

The Directorate has undertaken a focussed piece of work to understand the complexities of the situation and has considered systems implemented in other local authorities in Wales. The Directorate is hoping to implement a new system to manage moves between schools. It is hoped that this will have a positive impact. However, it must also be recognised that financial cuts mean that there will be less support staff available in schools and also less Directorate services available to assist schools with complex pupils.

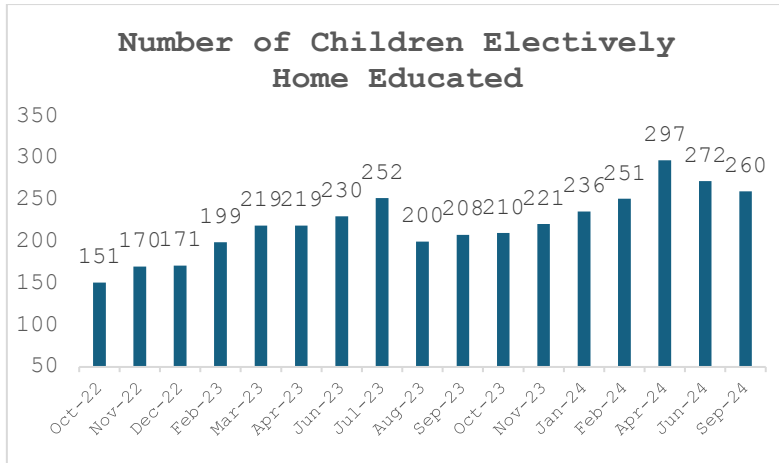
In a similar trend, the number of fixed-term exclusions has continued to increase over the past few years as can be seen from the table below.

	Number of fixed term exclusions			Number of lost days		
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Primary	Secondary	Special
2021-2022	166	1224	74	351.5	2395	124.5
2022-2023	248	1355	67	441	2574.5	152.5
2023-2024	269	1309	97	537.5	2400.5	204.5
1/9/2024 to 30/9/24	15	84	2	20	138	1.5

The numbers of children that are being educated other than at school (EOTAS) has increased considerably over the past school year with a significant proportion of these students being from last year's Year 11 cohort as there was a significant drop in EOTAS numbers following this year group going off roll.

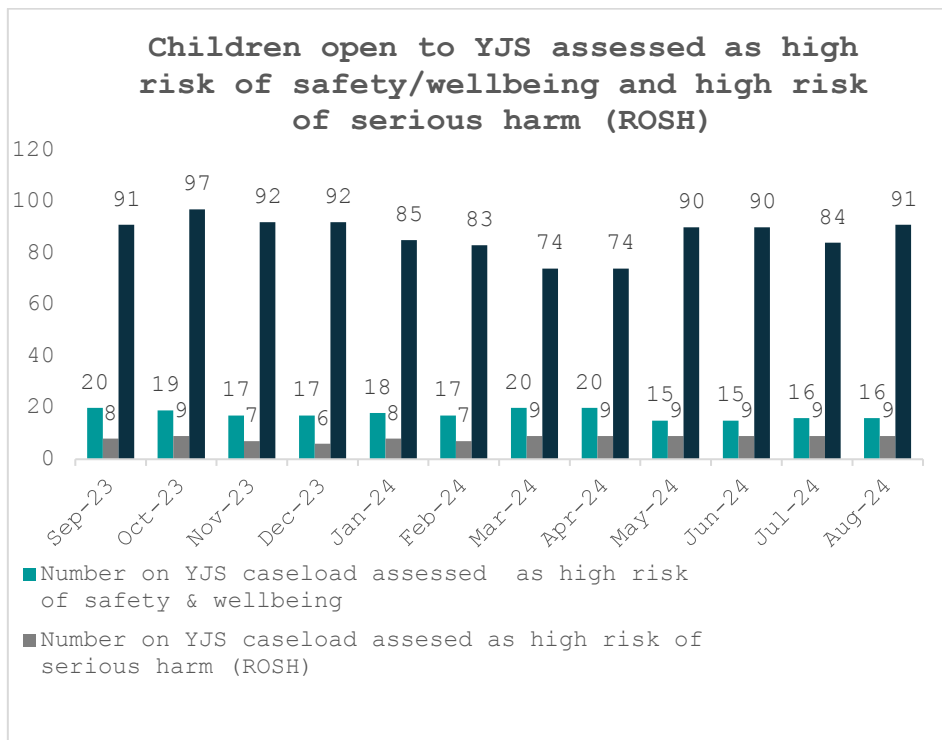


The number of children who are electively home educated has continued to follow similar patterns over this past school year as can be seen from the graph below.



Findings from school safeguarding audits for the 2023-2024 school year highlight that 54 education settings have rated themselves as green and 6 education settings have rated themselves as amber. No school has rated itself as 'red' during the 2023-2024 school year. This represents an increase of two schools who are now rated as green, and a reduction of 1 school that was rated 'red' across the previous school year. The school safeguarding audits are due to be completed by December 2024 for the 2024-2025 school year.

Across the year, the number of children and young people that have been open to the Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS) has reduced. However, the numbers of children and young people on the BYJS caseload that are assessed as having a high risk to their safety and wellbeing, along with those assessed as being at a high risk of serious harm (ROSH) has increased.



5. Workforce

Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR/OD) continue to provide workforce information to the Council's Safeguarding Board which meets monthly. The information includes a monthly update on the status of DBS checks and renewals as well as quarterly data relating to completion rates for safeguarding training.

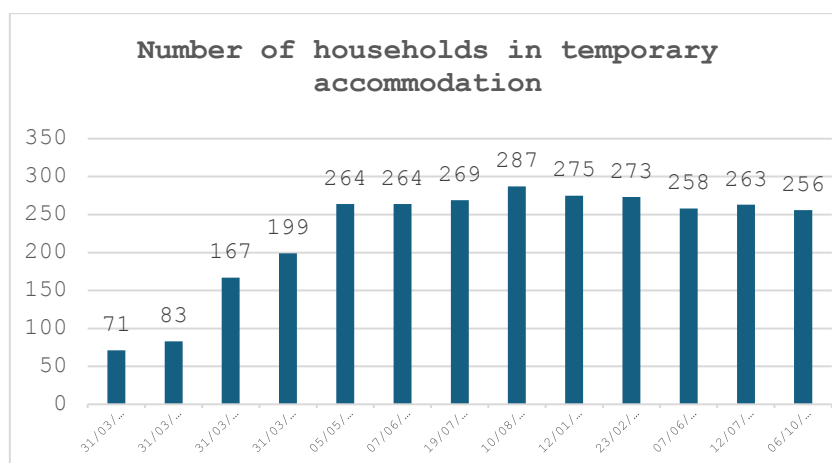
The Council's DBS policy has been reviewed and updated to include checks on those posts covered by regulated services. An escalation process has been agreed by the Corporate Safeguarding Board to deal with non-completions and renewal applications. The process includes monthly reports to be sent to Heads of Service and Group Managers for actioning.

In relation to Safeguarding e-learning, this is monitored by the Learning & Development team and escalation reports are issued to managers for actioning on a quarterly basis.

The Council also has a Recruitment and Selection Protocol to support managers when undertaking recruitment. It is expected that all managers who participate in recruitment complete the mandatory e-learning programme.

6. Housing

Across the year, as demonstrated by the following graph, the number of individuals in temporary accommodation is stabilising, following a period of significant increase in recent years. Temporary Accommodation numbers are a corporate concern with numbers and costs having gone up a lot in recent years. Whilst we have had a slight decrease in numbers, the overall picture is still very high compared to previous years.



Analysis of these individuals in temporary accommodation has been undertaken and will continue to be undertaken at quarterly intervals in order to understand the numbers of individuals that are open and known to Adults and Children's Services. Since the initial set of analysis has been completed, the number has halved. More work is needed to understand this further. The sharp increase in temporary accommodation placements in 2020/21 was largely due to emergency legislative guidance, from Welsh Government, leading to increased statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation. This legislative change is now permanent and as such still impacting on the number of placements, however wider issues such as the cost of living crisis

and the particularly challenging private rent market are significant factors, causing both increase in demand and making it harder for households to move on from temporary accommodation.

The following table shows the percentage of care leavers experiencing homelessness during the year and its reduction from the previous year. This is an accumulative total across the year and so the current position shown is only anticipated to rise across the year.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Qtr 1 2024/25	Qtr 2 2024/25
The Percentage of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year	8.23%	10.27%	7.17%	1.81%	4.00%

7. Partnership and Community Safety and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Bridgend Community Safety Partnership (CSP) involves various agencies from the public, private and voluntary sector that work together to reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime locally, in order to improve the quality of life and to create a safer living and working environment.

There has been new guidance produced by Welsh Government relating to the unification of practice reviews into a new Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) process. Guidance on this can be found [here](#). This year, there have been three SUSRs (formerly Adult/Child Practice reviews) published regarding Child F, Child Q, and Child C from Bridgend County Borough which can be found on the CTM Safeguarding Board website [here](#).

As updated previously, the partnership landscape for Cwm Taf Morgannwg (incorporating Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf) has changed over the last few years. There is one regional Public Services Board (PSB), and now one strategic Community Safety Partnership which is aligned to the PSB. Both Boards work on the basis of a regional strategy, but a local delivery model based on our communities. Recent reviews of the governance structures have also taken place.

Local community safety structures remain in place, including town centre anti-social behaviour (ASB) management meetings for Bridgend and Maesteg. These groups are well attended from a diverse range of agencies and meet to resolve problems. Successes over the last twelve months have seen drug dealing tackled on our buses, setting up joint patrols between Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Barod substance misuse workers and utilising our youth outreach team to attend hot spots for youth ASB and engage in diversionary activities, such as the successful 'Tackle After Dark' and 'Caerau Kicks' with the Ospreys and Cardiff City football club respectively.

Reports of ASB are generally reducing which is positive, but we continue to encourage communities and residents to report their concerns to the Police through online reporting and 101. Our activities are undertaken using ASB as an evidence base, so this reporting is vital for us understanding and addressing the challenges seen in our communities and supporting these communities to feel safe and inclusive.

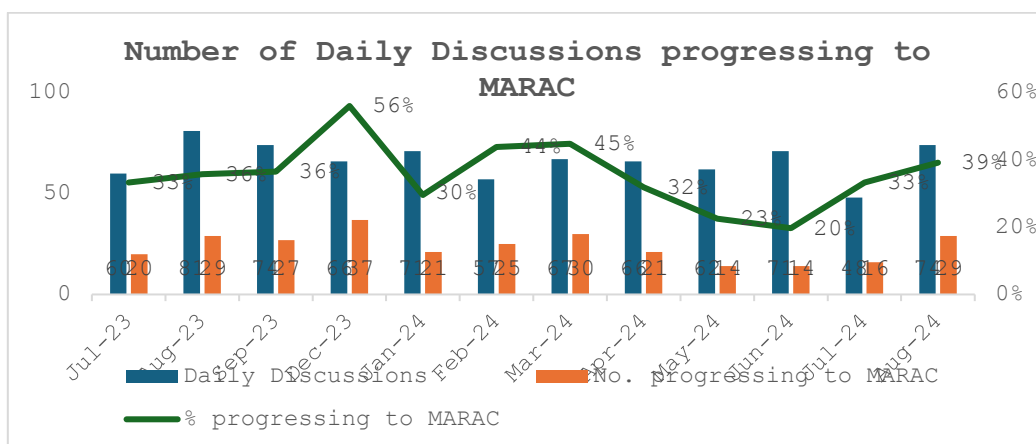
Initiatives such as 'Trecco Watch' have been created in response to concerns in Porthcawl, with the model looking to be replicated at Park Dean sites elsewhere in the county. Wildmill has been the focus of partnership working, including holding a community day in August as part of International Youth Day, developing a Crimestoppers Zone there to encourage anonymous reporting and targeted police operations. This is part of a 'Clear, Hold, Build' initiative taken forward by the community safety partnership for the area,

Acquisitive crime continues to be a challenge, and likely linked to the cost-of-living crisis and there is active engagement in the partnership with Bridgend Business Against Crime and Bridgend Traders Forum, as well as targeted operations throughout the year.

Bridgend's Community Cohesion officer post is vacant following the previous job holder taking up a regional position in Western Bay. Bridgend still benefits from support from the Western Bay Community Cohesion team and have supported a lot of work in the borough resulting in visual improvements, such as the popular street art work, and the 'Bridgend Celebrates Diversity' project with Bridgend College which is showcased in a vacant property in Bridgend town centre. The team have also been involved in administering small grants to community groups undertaking relevant work and supported Bridgend with tension monitoring, equality support and learning and training opportunities.

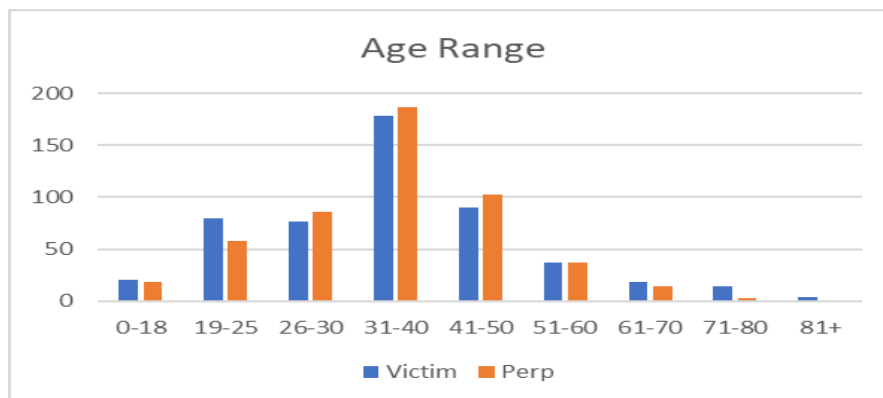
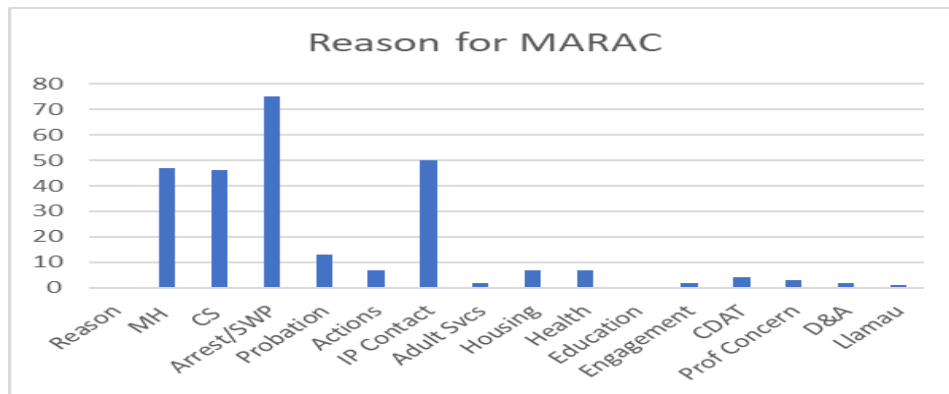
Assia domestic abuse service has seen further expansion and offers a diverse range of bespoke support to meet the wide range of service users. This includes a dedicated older persons independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA), a young person's IDVA and a male victim IDVA. The high quality of service provided has been recognised by Assia achieving 'Leading Lights' accreditation, making it the only council-led provision in Wales to hold the standard.

The following graph shows the number of daily discussions that have progressed to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), which is a meeting specifically set out to discuss how to help victims of domestic violence.



At present, 39% of daily discussions are progressing to a full MARAC, and included in this data above are a number of cases which are listed as information only, this is due to the victim having been listed previously but there have since been further incidents.

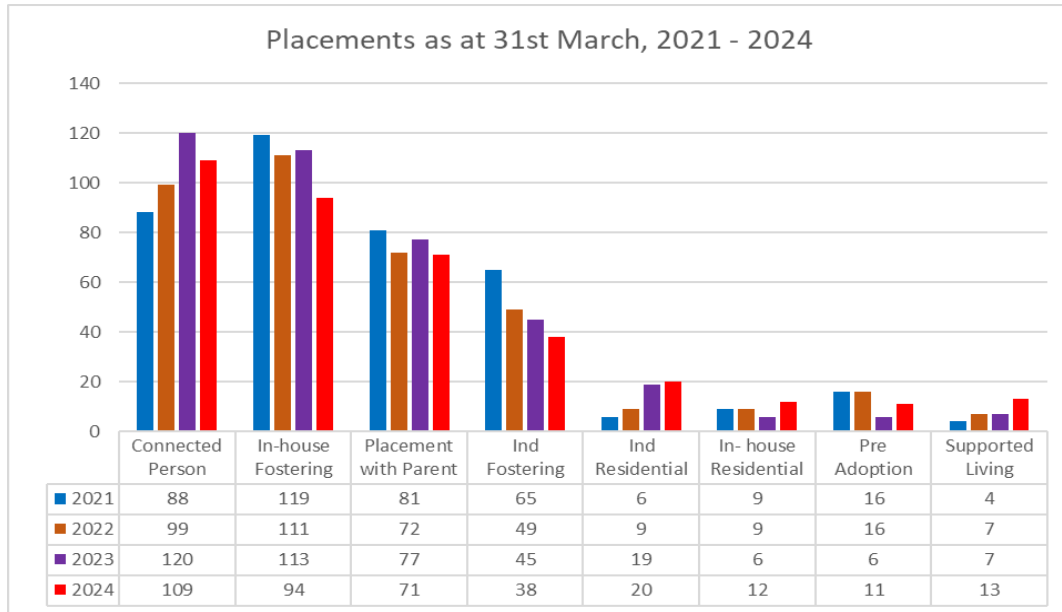
The following two graphs provide a current breakdown of the reasons for MARAC's being convened along with a breakdown of the age ranges of individuals involved, both victims and perpetrators.



8. Placement Sufficiency, Out of County Placements and Operating Without Registration (OWRs)

In 2022, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board undertook a Population Needs Assessment, and a Market Stability Report produced, to assess current and future needs which contributed to informing local and regional strategies. A Children, Young Person and Transition Commissioning Strategy 2023-2028 has been developed by the Council which outlines the plan on how Bridgend will address these challenges, with a key priority being placement sufficiency across fostering, residential and supported accommodation. In addition to this, the Council is required by Welsh Government to have a Placement Commissioning Strategy (PCS) which is also being developed. The PCS will specifically focus on placements and placement sufficiency across the county borough.

The following graph shows the position and trend of different types of placements utilised across Children and Family services in Bridgend.



29% of care experienced children are living with connected persons, which is the majority of placements, closely followed by those living with in-house foster carers at 25%. 10% are placed with Independent Foster Agency (IFA) and 3% are placed in a pre-adoption placement. 19% were subject to Placement with Parents regulations, at the 31st of March 2024. These children’s plans are scrutinised at the Local Authority’s bi-monthly Permanency Monitoring Group Meetings, with clear plans in place regarding timescales for revocation applications where that care plan is deemed to be appropriate. Of those children who require a residential placement, 3% of the total care experienced population are looked after in Bridgend children’s homes and 5% of the total care experienced population are looked after with independent providers.

A degree of placement movement can be healthy for some children, indicating a progression in care and support plans in a timely manner which is in the best interests of a child as their placement needs change. This planned movement is most likely in the first 6 to 12 months of a child becoming care experienced as their permanence plans are determined. Where a child’s plan for permanence is to remain care experienced, long term stability is evidenced to deliver best outcomes. Lack of sufficiency and placement choice can have dual impact on stability; a reduction in planned moves due to lack of appropriate match to move a child onto in their best interests, or an increase in unplanned and emergency moves where a child has been placed in an inappropriate match unable to meet their needs, resulting in disruption.

BCBC remain above the Wales Average for children with 3 or more placements moves per year, and is generally higher than the comparator local authorities for the period 2019 to 2023 (latest published data on Stats Wales). However, it is positive to note that recent local data indicates that BCBC’s three or more placement moves figure has decreased from 10.8% at 31st March 2023 to 6.2% at 31st March 2024.

Placement sufficiency across the county borough remains an area of concern and will continue to be monitored and actioned. Further information relating to the ongoing

work and plans to improve placement sufficiency can be found in the commissioning strategy.

Across the past year there has been work undertaken looking at the number of placements for children and young people who are placed outside the boundaries of Bridgend County Borough. It is an unfortunate position that most Local Authorities find themselves in regarding requiring placements outside their local authority borders but this can be related to a number of factors and not just solely availability of suitable placements. The needs of Children and Young People will dictate as to whether an Out of County Placement is required, this could be to manage and mitigate risks associated with the individual, or in order to access specialist support which is unavailable within the county borders. BCBC strives to provide and identify suitable placements for care experienced children and young people within its county borders, if individual children or young people do not meet the threshold for an out of county placement in order to mitigate risks or access specialist services, an out of county placement will only be used if there is no other possible placement available. As can be seen from the below graph, the number of Care Experienced Children and Young People placed outside of Bridgend but inside Wales, as well as those placed Outside Wales have reduced across the past year.

	01/10/22	As at
	-	at
	30/09/23	30/09/24
Placements out of Bridgend but in Wales	88	72
Placements outside of Wales	15	14

30 children placed out of county currently are residing in Foster Wales Bridgend placements with General and Connected Persons carers. 19 of these children are placed with their parents. 18 are placed with independent fostering providers. The remaining children are placed with residential providers including 1 that is Operating Without Registration.

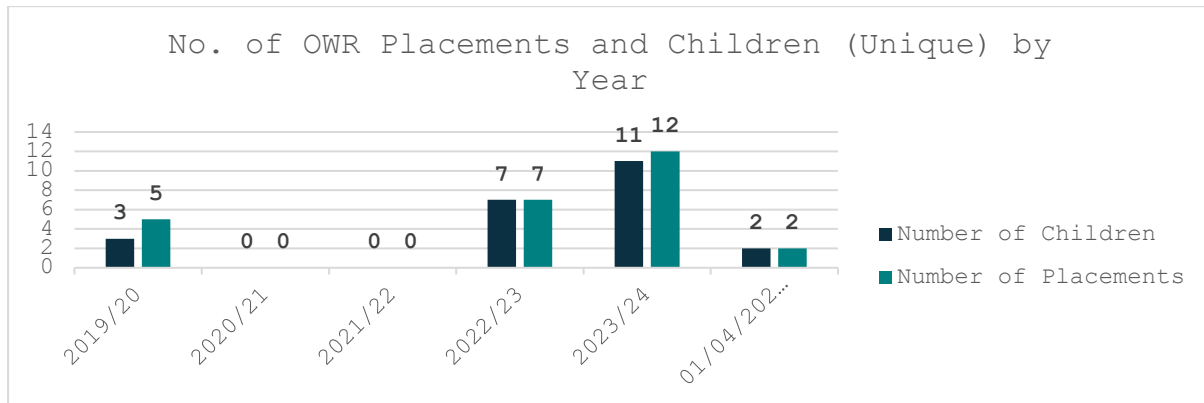
Operating Without Registration (OWR) placements are emergency placements made where the provider is not registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in accordance with legislation.

Local authorities place children within such arrangements when there is an overriding need for a placement and where there are no other options available. Such considerations are subject to the highest levels of scrutiny and can only be agreed by the Director of Social Services and Wellbeing or the Head of Children and Family Services in their absence. In all cases CIW are notified of the placement and regular updates provided evidencing the additional oversight in place to support and safeguard the child, and the continued search activity of the Placement Team to secure a registered provision. These arrangements can vary:

- In some cases, the local authority places children with a provider who is in the process of setting up a new residential home but has not secured registration at the point this is needed.

- In others, a child can be placed with a Supported Living provider, a home for children aged 16+ who have support needs but with an additional package to meet any identified care needs of the child/ren.
- A child may also be placed in a home that is rented by the local authority with the support of a staff team recruited from an agency and/or supported by local authority staff.

The following graph shows the trend of OWR placements from across the past year.



9. Other Key Areas of Focus

The level of demand continuing to be received into Children's Social Care continues to exceptionally high. PPN's continue to be a main source of the high levels of demand. Meetings with South Wales Police have been held to look at how the demand can be best managed. A variety of workshops will be held with staff to develop an approach that ensures children and families access support from the right service at the right time.

There continues to be challenges related to children in out of county residential placements. The Health and Social Care Bill, which when on the statute books will provide the legislation for moving away from profit in children's social care in Wales, has been laid before the Senedd. Urgent consideration will need to be given in the coming years as to how the local authority can develop resources that can meet the needs of those children within Bridgend.

There have been a cluster of deaths by Suicide within the Secure Estate. There has been a multi-agency response. A working group, which mirrors the escalating concerns process for regulated care settings, has been established and regular updates are being received by the CTMRBSB. In addition to this, between January 2023 to February 2024, there were 18 referrals relating to deaths by Suicide to the CTM Immediate Response Group (IRG) panel, 36.8% were females, 63.2% were males. There were 15 suicides in Bridgend in 2021 and in 2022 up until September there were 20 deaths.

A new Corporate Volunteering policy, which was approved by Cabinet in November 2023, sets out and identifies any areas for consideration regarding the use of volunteers, especially in services that may support vulnerable individuals.

Staffing challenges have continued to be experienced across both Children and Family Services and Adult Social Care Social work teams. In Children and Family services, international recruitment of social workers has continued to take place to support with the vacancy position experienced across its Social Work teams and is now in a more stable position regarding permanently employed staff than when international recruitment processes were begun. The total number of agency social workers is also down across Children and Family social work teams, including the successful transition away from the managed team that was providing support to the front door IAA team since April 2022. Following the model that has been utilised when the managed team were in place, a second IAA team has been created to support with capacity in the front door. Through the implementation of a second permanent team, not only will there be a positive impact upon service budgets through the reduction of agency costs allowing for more money to be spent elsewhere supporting vulnerable children, young people and families, but greater consistency of process and support will be provided to children, young people and families who are referred for assessment, including supporting appropriate registrations and reducing inappropriate registrations onto the Child Protection Register. This will remain an area of focus and development for the coming year.

Across Adults Services Social Work teams, recent challenges relating to capacity and availability have begun to arise, particularly across the new Early Intervention and Prevention front door team. This is related to some long-term sickness absence as well as vacant positions. New processes have been identified working alongside colleagues from the Corporate Front Door Customer Services team which are supporting in ensuring the appropriate allocation and redirection of contacts into Adults Services, along with the new Consultation process that is underway as previously mentioned. This remains an area of concern and will continue to be monitored and acted upon into the coming year.

10. Priority areas for future focus

In line with the process undertaken within school and education settings regarding their safeguarding audits, a process is being identified and agreed through the Corporate Safeguarding Board to support service areas in assessing and improving their safeguarding performance. This process is being adapted from the School Safeguarding Audit process in order for continuity and familiarity of process to be undertaken. This will allow each service area to fully understand their performance regarding safeguarding in a meaningful way, and where they can improve upon their existing performance in safeguarding the vulnerable individuals they support.

Following a Regional Safeguarding Board meeting, where a presentation was shared regarding Cybercrime and the continued development of types and means of Cybercrime by criminals, the same presentation was organised to be shared with CSB. Discussions were held around the prevalence of Cybercrime and how this may become something more prevalent across safeguarding referrals in both Adults and Children's safeguarding services. Work is planned to increase and raise awareness of

Cybercrime and its prevalence in a team and service specific and targeted manner for the coming year.

Following the challenges that have been experienced across the county borough and the secure estate regarding suicide, a local multi-agency Suicide Prevention Group (SPG) has been organised and implemented across the County Borough in order to support individuals and services. Its purpose is:

- To improve awareness, knowledge and understanding of suicide and self-harm amongst the public, individuals who frequently come in to contact with people at risk of suicide and self-harm and professionals in Wales;
- To deliver appropriate responses to personal crises, early intervention and management of suicide and self-harm;
- To provide better information and support for those bereaved or affected by suicide and self-harm;
- To support the media in responsible reporting and portrayal of suicide and suicidal behaviour;
- To reduce access to the means of suicide;
- To continue to promote and support learning, information and monitoring systems and research to improve our understanding of suicide and self-harm in Wales and guide action.
- To be a focused multi-agency working group to work on preventative measures and strengthen our support from lessons learned
- to identify any gaps in services particularly at the primary prevention, groups at greater risk and crisis intervention levels in order to bring about change.

The SPG reports to the Bridgend Safeguarding Partners Joint operational group and has been in operation since July 2024. Work continues towards identifying an appropriate local preventative support group.

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	CO-ORDINATED SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2027-2028
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	EMMA GILES SENIOR PUPIL SERVICES OFFICER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024, requires local authorities to formulate and publish a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all maintained schools, (except school sixth-form places, maintained special schools and maintained nursery schools, but including boarding schools) within their area.</p> <p>The applicable legislation requires that co-ordinated school admission arrangements for 2027-2028 are determined by 1 January 2025.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 (see **Appendix A**).

2. Background

- 2.1 Welsh Government’s Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024, requires local authorities to formulate and publish a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all maintained schools, (except school sixth-form places, maintained special schools and maintained Nursery schools, but including boarding schools) within their area.

- 2.2 As part of the statutory process, the local authority has a duty to consult with stakeholders as identified in the Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024. This includes the governing bodies of all schools in Bridgend (including voluntary controlled schools) who are their own admission authority and the Bridgend Admission Forum.
- 2.3 The local authority is required to publish annually the following:
- the co-ordinated school admissions arrangements; and
 - an admissions policy and guidance on the admission arrangements for its schools.
- 2.4 These are published on the local authority's website.
- 2.5 The co-ordinated school admissions arrangements includes details of how the scheme is to be administered, the participants in the scheme, a timetable of actions and the published admission number (PAN) for each school in Bridgend to which the arrangements apply is also required to be published.
- 2.6 The PAN for a school is the number of pupils that can be admitted to any year group for statutory-age pupils.

3. Current situation/proposal

- 3.1 The consultation on the 2027-2028 arrangements took place with all parties between 28 October 2024 and 15 November 2024 (refer to paragraph 2.2).
- 3.2. One response to the consultation was received, regarding a minor point of clarity in relation to section 3 of the Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028. A minor amendment was made to ensure grammatical correctness.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.
- 4.2 It is a statutory duty that admission authorities are mindful of their duties with regards to equalities legislation. The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 adheres to these requirements.
- 4.3 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been carried out (see **Appendix B**). The outcome of the assessment is that the local authority's proposed Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 should have a neutral impact on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, opportunities to promote the Welsh language, the local authority's compliance with the statutory Welsh Language Standards and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment has been completed. A summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is as follows:

Long-term

The co-ordinated school admission arrangements will support the school admissions policy, to set out how the local authority will balance the discharge of its statutory duty in relation to parental preference, the need to safeguard the delivery of effective education and the safety of pupils, and the need to support pupils in particular circumstances (for example, learners with specific vulnerabilities), in circumstances where the applications for places at a school exceed the number of available places.

Prevention

The Co-ordinated School Admission Arrangements allow stakeholders to raise issues or make comments on proposals, for consideration of appropriate actions.

Integration

The Co-ordinated School Admission Arrangements support the allocation of school places and therefore the provision of education in the communities in which pupils live.

Collaboration

The local authority has worked in conjunction with key stakeholders to develop the proposed Co-ordinated School Admission Arrangements, for maintained community and voluntary-aided schools.

Involvement

In accordance with the specified requirements of the Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024, local authorities are required to formulate and publish a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all maintained schools, (except school sixth-form places, maintained special schools and maintained Nursery schools, but including boarding schools) within their area. The local authority will consult each year on the proposed Co-ordinated School Admission Arrangements for the relevant year these arrangements apply to.

- 5.2 A summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the Council's new seven well-being objectives, is as follows:

1 A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable

The local authority's Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 adheres to the statutory requirements to ensure that admissions for vulnerable

learners are processed as detailed in the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code 2013. Applications received in respect of vulnerable learners will continue to be processed as per Section 8 of the School Admissions Policy to ensure fair access to mainstream school places for individual children within the specific groups, in accordance with the defined terms of reference. The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 will not impact on the admission policy for community maintained and voluntary-aided schools.

2 A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns

Access to good education and ensuring children have equal opportunities to realise their potential are critical to helping young people acquire the knowledge and skills they need for work. The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 in conjunction with the School Admissions Policy 2027-2028 will ensure that statutory requirements are met, to provide an admissions system that is accessible to all, encompassing the principles of fairness, consistency and openness across all aspects of schools admissions. It plays a crucial role in delivering equality of opportunity. The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 is a separate scheme that works to support a simplified process of school admissions, and to provide parents with the need to submit a single application and to receive a single offer of a school place for their child. This scheme will support the regulatory duty of the admission authority.

3 A County Borough with thriving valleys communities

Access to good education, raising standards of achievement and ensuring children have equal opportunities to realise their potential, wherever they may reside, are critical to helping young people acquire the knowledge and skills they need for work. The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 in conjunction with the School Admissions Policy 2027-2028 will ensure the statutory requirements are met to provide an admissions system that is accessible to all, encompassing the principles of fairness, consistency and openness across all aspects of schools admissions. It plays a crucial role in delivering equality of opportunity. The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 is a separate scheme that works to support a simplified process of school admissions, and to provide parents with the need to submit a single application and to receive a single offer of a school place for their child. This scheme will support the regulatory duty of the admission authority.

4 A County Borough where we help people meet their potential

The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 ensures that children and young people have access to good education and equal opportunities to realise their potential.

5 A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency

The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 will be accessible to all residents online at <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/school-admissions/apply-for-admission-to-school/> thus reducing the local authority's carbon footprint.

6 A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community

The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 has regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents/carers, so far as that would be compatible with the provision of efficient education and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure (S.9 Education Act 1996).

7 A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

The local authority's Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 allows children and young people by providing access to schools and education where they can learn to thrive and make the best use of their talents, live healthy and safe lives, be confident and caring individuals and know and receive their rights.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The local authority, as the admission authority has a strategic role in considering the impact of net zero carbon and how to deliver this important national initiative.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 The Education (Admission of Looked-After Children) (Wales) Regulations 2009 places a duty on the admission authority to admit children looked after by the local authority, where an application is made by the corporate parent on their behalf. The School Admissions Policy 2027-2028 will continue to ensure that the local authority, adheres to this statutory requirement. The Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 is a separate scheme that intends to simplify the process of school admissions and to provide parents with a single offer of a school place for their child. This scheme will support the regulatory duty of the admission authority to adhere to the legislation referenced above.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications regarding this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Co-ordinated School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028 (as in **Appendix A**).

Background documents:

None

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. / This document is available in Welsh.



Co-ordinated School Admission Arrangements 2027-2028

(1 September 2027 – 31 August 2028)

1. Introduction

The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024, requires local authorities to formulate and publish a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all maintained schools, (except school sixth-form places, maintained special schools and maintained nursery schools, but including boarding schools) within their area.

The entry of children to schools is controlled and administered by an 'admission authority'. In the case of co-ordinated school admissions in Bridgend, Bridgend County Borough Council (also referred to in this document as 'the local authority') will administer the co-ordinated school admission arrangements.

Appendix A identifies each school to which the co-ordinated scheme applies and whether the local authority, or the governing body, is the admission authority.

In accordance with the Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999, the relevant area for the admission authority, is the geographical area of the County Borough of Bridgend.

Co-ordinated schemes are intended to simplify the admissions process for parents/carers whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is reasonably practicable, every parent/carer of a child living in a local authority area, who submits an application within the normal admissions round, is sent one, and only one, offer of a school place by their local authority.

The local authority is unable to support applications to schools not in the geographical area of Bridgend.

The local authority continuously reviews and reserves the right to amend its admissions procedures for statutory and non-statutory education.

The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024 state that each year all local authorities must formulate and adopt a co-ordinated scheme by 1 January in the relevant determination year.

Where the scheme is substantially different from the scheme adopted for the previous school year, the local authority must consult the other admission authorities in the area and any other local authority it determines appropriate to consult with.

Where the scheme has not changed from the previous year, there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that the local authority must consult on the scheme at least once every six years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

A local authority must inform the Welsh Ministers, whether they have secured the adoption of a qualifying scheme by 28 February in the determination year. A co-ordinated scheme may be imposed by Welsh Ministers where a local authority has not notified the Welsh Ministers by 28 February each determination year, whether or not a scheme has been adopted.

All admission authorities must participate in the co-ordination of the normal admission round and provide the local authority with the information it needs to co-ordinate admissions by the dates agreed within the scheme.

2. Administration of the co-ordinated scheme

The local authority will co-ordinate admission arrangements for applications in the normal admission rounds, that is, Reception and Year 7.

Parents will need to complete an online 'Common Application Form' and can express up to three preferences for community and/or voluntary-aided schools.

The local authority and the admission authorities for the voluntary-aided schools will exchange information on applications made, ranking of preferences and confirmation of offers by the dates specified in the admission round timetables.

Offers of places must be sent by the local authority on the national offer day. For secondary school admissions, this is 1 March or the next working day, and for primary schools, this is 16 April or the next working day. Parents/carers will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

If a preference is declined, parents/carers will be offered the right of appeal. How the appeal is processed will depend on the type of school that has been declined. Full details of how to submit an appeal will be included within the response letter to the parent/carer.

2.1 Participants in the scheme

The local authority is the admission authority for maintained community schools (see Appendix 1). The following schools are voluntary-aided and are their own admission authority:

- Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
- St Robert's Roman Catholic Primary School
- Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School

3. Parental preference

3.1 The duty to comply with parental preference

In relation to admissions to primary schools (excluding nursery classes), junior schools and secondary schools (excluding sixth forms), the local authority has a statutory duty to have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents/carers, so far as that would be compatible with the provision of

efficient education and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure (S.9 Education Act 1996).

The local authority applies the same principle of parental preference to applications for non-statutory, nursery education, in a local authority-maintained school.

The duty of the local authority to comply with parental preference does not apply where:

1. To admit would be incompatible with the statutory duty to meet infant class size regulations.
2. To admit the child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.
3. Where arrangements for entry to a school's sixth form are based wholly on selection by reference to ability or aptitude and compliance with the preference, would be incompatible with selection under those arrangements.
4. The child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools. Where this is the case, the local authority is not required to comply with parental preference for a school place for a period of two years from the first school day of the second exclusion.

This disapplication from the requirement to comply with parental preference does not apply to:

- Pupils who were below compulsory school age when they were excluded.
- Pupils who were reinstated after permanent exclusion, or pupils who would have been reinstated following a permanent exclusion, had it been practicable to do so.
- Pupils with statements of special educational need or individual development plans (IDP).
- Pupils who are looked after (the application for admission must be made by the corporate parent), or previously looked after children (the application for admission must be accompanied by evidence of the previously looked after status).

3.2 Compliance with parental preference

Within the local authority, each English-medium school has an area it serves (its catchment area). For Welsh-medium schools and faith (voluntary-aided schools), there are no catchment areas. However, the local authority must allow all parents/carers the opportunity to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend regardless of catchment area. While most parents/carers are happy to choose their catchment area

school, there is no requirement for that school to be selected by parents/carers on a school admission or in-year school admission/transfer application. The application allows parents/carers to list more than one school in order of preference. The local authority will offer a place at the highest available preferred school.

The local authority is committed to the principle of providing local schools for local children and will make every effort to ensure that parents/carers are able to secure a place for their child/ren at the catchment school, where parents/carers have expressed a preference for that school. However, parents/carers must not automatically assume that a place will be available for their child at their catchment school, or any other school they may wish to apply for.

The local authority will meet the preferences for admission expressed by parents/carers ahead of those who have expressed no preference. Consequently, for the admission rounds, parents/carers must ensure they record their preference/s on the school admission application and that the application is submitted to the local authority by the stated deadline.

3.3 Changes to an expressed parental preference

For admission rounds, if the parent/carer wishes to make a change to the school preference/s after the application has been submitted to the local authority:

1. The change must be notified to the local authority **in writing** (email or letter).
2. If the change is notified to the local authority **before** the published closing date for the admission round, the change will be taken into consideration in the application of oversubscription criteria and the allocation of places.
3. If the change is notified to the local authority **after** the closing date for the admission round, the school preference/s recorded on the application will be used in the application of oversubscription criteria and the allocation of places. The parent/carer will have the option to complete and submit a late application if the allocated place is at a school that is no longer the preferred school, which would be subject to the provisions relevant to late applications (see section 9.2). However, in these circumstances, the local authority will offer the applicant the option instead, to maintain the original application and school preference/s.

The admission application form will indicate the maximum number of school preferences that a parent/carer can express. A parent/carer may choose to express a lesser number of school preferences. However, in such a situation, if the local authority cannot offer a place at any preferred school, the local authority will take no further action in respect of the application. The parent/carer will be required to complete and submit a new application for any alternative school, which will be processed as a late application in accordance with the provisions of section 9.2.

4. School catchment areas

4.1 Welsh-medium schools

There are no catchment areas for the Welsh-medium schools within Bridgend.

4.2 Voluntary-aided schools

There are no catchment areas for the voluntary-aided schools within Bridgend.

4.3 All other schools

[School catchment area maps](#) are published on the local authority's website.

Catchment areas are subject to change, with any changes being subject to consultation prior to implementation.

There is no right to, or guarantee of, an offer of a place at a child's catchment area school.

5. School capacity and published admission number

The capacity of a school is the number of pupil places it contains.

Welsh Government has published a capacity calculation methodology for all schools. This aims to provide a robust and consistent method of assessing the pupil capacity of all community, voluntary-aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools in Wales.

A school's calculated capacity is based on existing accommodation at a school and its usage. For statutory-age year groups (Reception to Year 11) the calculated capacity informs the published admission number for a school.

Appendix B provides the published admission numbers for all schools for which the local authority is the admission authority.

For a normal year of entry (that is, Reception and Year 7), the local authority will admit pupils up to the published admission number.

As the published admission number reflects the school's ability to accommodate pupils, the local authority will only exceed the published admission number in exceptional circumstances.

6. Information or circumstances that the local authority does not consider when making admission decisions

The following is not an exhaustive list, but details the principal information and circumstances that have no bearing on admission decisions:

- Any school that the child has previously attended.
- Any particular school that the child might attend in the future.
- A parent/carer communicating to any school that there is an intention to apply for a place at the school. This would include any instance when a parent/carer believes that they have 'registered' their child's name for a place at the school.
- An invitation to, or attendance by a child, at a 'taster'/transition day at any school.
- Allowance by any school of a visit by the parents/carers and/or child.
- Any indication, either explicitly given or assumed by a parent/carer to have been given by a school, that there are places available at the school in any year group, with the exception of sixth-form places.

7. Equalities

The local authority's School Admissions Policy and arrangements seeks to achieve full compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance, with regard to equal opportunities and human rights (Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011).

The local authority wants its services to be accessible to the whole community and will challenge discrimination in our communities, whether it is based on a person's gender status, race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity marriage or civil partnership.

The local authority's Corporate Equality Scheme sets out how the local authority will comply with its Public Sector Equality Duty in exercising its functions, having due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the legislation;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.

8. Data protection and information sharing

The local authority complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The full [Data Protection guidance and principles](#) of the local authority may be viewed on the website.

Any information recorded by an applicant in a school admission application will be held electronically and used by the local authority for the purpose of processing the application.

The local authority will share the information provided in a school admission application with the relevant school/s in accordance with [fair processing](#).

The local authority will investigate any school admission applications where there is doubt about the information that has been provided. This will be to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage in the school application system and under Schedule 2, part 1, 2(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

9. Admissions rounds

9.1 Submission of applications

There is a requirement for parents/carers to apply for a school place for their child.

A school admission application **must** be completed by a parent/carer.

A separate application is required for each child.

A child will not be permitted to start at a school until an application has been received and processed by the local authority, and a school place has been offered by the local authority to the parent/carer in writing.

The applicant

In respect of admission applications, the application must be made by a 'parent' of the child, as defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

Therefore, for the purposes of education law, a 'parent' is deemed to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative; and
- any person who has care of a child or young person, but is not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part-time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The local authority uses the term 'parent/carer' to reflect the legal definition of 'parent', as detailed above.

The local authority will only accept an application from a person who is not a parent/carer if it is accompanied by an appropriate written authorisation from a parent/carer.

An applicant will be required to make a declaration of the relationship to the child and provide such information as the local authority requires, including documentation, evidencing that relationship, at the time the admission application is submitted.

How to apply

Applications can be completed online through sign up to 'My Account' on the Bridgend County Borough Council website.

Any parents/carers who do not have access to their own computer/laptop or smart phone, may use the computers available within the libraries in the county borough to sign up to My Account and complete a school admission application. A parent/carer who remains unable to create a My Account and access the relevant online school admission application, may contact the local authority and request a hardcopy school admission application.

If parents/carers permit completion and submission of a school admission application for their child through the My Account of a third party, the My Account holder will be deemed to be submitting the application on behalf of, and with the full authority of, the parents/carers of the child. In these circumstances, the parents/carers will be considered as accepting responsibility for the consequence of any errors or deficiencies in the completion of the application and/or the submission of the application.

The local authority accepts no responsibility for the non-receipt of an application that is not submitted through the online facility.

If the local authority's procedures for the submission of admission applications changes before or during the effective dates of these co-ordinated arrangements, details will be published in the Starting School Prospectus 2027-2028 and on the [local authority's website](#).

9.2 Late applications

An application should be submitted in time for **receipt** by the local authority by the published closing time and date.

Late applications can be submitted, up to 31 August 2027, online through 'My Account' on the Bridgend County Borough Council website.

Late applications will be processed by the local authority after the relevant published offer date and in order of date and time received. Oversubscription criteria will not apply if a place is available in the preferred school at the time the application is processed as it will be offered. Late applicants may find that their preferred school is already full, even if the school is their catchment school.

9.3 Primary/infant school admission round (Reception)

The relevant age group for the Reception year is 4-5 years.

Every child is required by law to receive full-time education from the beginning of the school term after their fifth birthday. In Bridgend, children are normally admitted to the Reception year in the September following their fourth birthday. However, parents/carers have the option of deferring their child's entry to the Reception year until later in the same school year. The deferment cannot continue beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the school year for which the original admission application was accepted by the local authority. Where the parent/carer wishes to defer the child's entry to the Reception year as detailed, the local authority will hold a place for the child.

An application for a Reception year place **must** be submitted. **There is no automatic admission to the Reception year at any primary or infant school, regardless of the school at which the child may be attending a nursery class.**

The co-ordinated school admission arrangements for Reception include all community primary schools and the following voluntary-aided primary schools:

- Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
- St Robert's Roman Catholic Primary School

Parents will need to complete an online 'Common Application Form' and can express up to three preferences for community and/or voluntary-aided schools.

Parents applying for a voluntary-aided school may also complete a supplementary application form for the individual school (if the school wishes to implement this form). This form would be returned directly to the school's governing body along with any required references, documentary evidence and any other information required. Any supporting information received by the local authority will be passed to the relevant voluntary-aided school for the allocation of places in accordance with their over-subscription criteria.

Timetable for Reception admissions for September 2027

The expected timetable for children born between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023, entering a Reception class in September 2027 is as follows:

Action	Date
Opening date for submission of applications.	10am Monday 9 November 2026
Closing date for receipt of applications.	4pm Friday 15 January 2027
The local authority will forward details of all applications received for voluntary-aided schools to the relevant school in order that they may apply the oversubscription criteria within the school's admission arrangements.	Friday 12 February 2027
Voluntary-aided schools to notify the local authority of a ranked list of applicants as per the oversubscription criteria in their admission policies.	Friday 12 March 2027
The local authority will inform other local authorities of the number of applications processed from residents within their area.	Friday 26 March 2027
Notification to be sent by the local authority to applicants of offer or refusal of places (that is, the 'offer date').	Friday 16 April 2027
Notification by parents, within 14 calendar days, to the local authority of acceptance or refusal of places offered.	Friday 30 April 2027
Closing date for parents/carers to submit an appeal.	4pm Friday 14 May 2027

9.4 Secondary school admission round (Year 7)

Children normally enter Year 7 in secondary school at the beginning of the school year following their eleventh birthday.

An application for a Year 7 place **must** be submitted. **There is no automatic admission to any secondary school, regardless of the primary or junior school that a child currently attends.**

In Bridgend, there is one Welsh-medium secondary school (that is, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd). There is one faith secondary school (that is, Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School). All other secondary schools are English-medium.

Parents will need to complete an online 'Common Application Form' and can express up to three preferences for community and/or voluntary-aided schools.

Parents applying for a voluntary-aided school may also complete a supplementary application form for the individual school, if the school wishes to implement this form. This form would be returned directly to the school's governing body along with any required references, documentary evidence and any other information required. Any supporting information received by the local authority will be passed to the relevant voluntary-aided school for the allocation of places in accordance with their over-subscription criteria.

Timetable for Year 7 secondary school admissions for September 2027

The expected timetable for children born between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016, transferring from junior/primary school (Year 6) to secondary school (Year 7) in September 2027 is as follows:

Action	Date
Opening date for submission of applications.	10am Monday 14 September 2026
Closing date for receipt of applications.	4pm Saturday 31 October 2026
The local authority will forward details of all applications received for voluntary-aided schools to the relevant school in order that they may apply the oversubscription criteria within the school's admission arrangements.	Friday 27 November 2026

Voluntary-aided schools to notify the local authority of a ranked list of applicants as per the oversubscription criteria in their admission policies.	Monday 18 January 2027
The local authority will inform other local authorities of the number of applications processed from residents within their area.	Friday 5 February 2027
Notification to be sent by the local authority to applicants of offer or refusal of places (that is, the 'offer date').	Monday 1 March 2027
Notification by parents, within 14 calendar days, to the local authority of acceptance or refusal of place offered.	Monday 15 March 2027
Closing date for parents/carers to submit an appeal.	4pm Monday 5 April 2027

10. The offer process for co-ordinated admissions rounds

10.1 Offer dates

The School Admissions Code 2013 sets out how admission authorities in Wales must identify the offer date for primary school (Reception) and secondary school (Year 7) admissions rounds, reflecting The School Admissions (Common Offer Date) (Wales) Regulations 2013. The relevant offer dates for all admissions rounds for 2027-2028 are detailed in section 9.

10.2 Communication of the outcome

Parents/carers who submit an application by the published closing time and date of an admission round, or parents/carers whose late application has been accepted by the local authority for inclusion in the allocation of places for the offer date, will be notified by the local authority, in writing of the outcome of their application.

Parents/carers may not expect that the outcome of their application will be communicated verbally.

If the application is refused, the notification will set out the reasons for the decision and will advise parents/carers of the appeal process.

Where applications have been received from parents/carers from another local authority, the local authority will notify that local authority of the number of applications processed

only and the number of successful applications. No personal information will be automatically shared.

10.3 Acceptance of offer by parents/carers

Parents/carers who have received an offer of a place on the offer day, must confirm with the local authority acceptance of the place within two weeks after the offer date.

10.4 Waiting lists

The local authority will maintain waiting lists for all schools where there was oversubscription to that school. Voluntary-aided schools will notify the local authority when places become available. The local authority will notify the parent/carer of the offer of an available place by letter.

If a place at the preferred school is not offered, the child will be automatically included in the waiting list for the school unless the parent/carer expressly advises the local authority that this action is not required.

For the **admission rounds**, children will remain on the waiting list, for any school at which they have been refused a place, until 30 September 2027. Children will automatically be removed from the waiting list/s after this date.

If additional places become available at a school, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria and **not** the length of time a child has been on the waiting list.

11. In-year admissions / transfers

The co-ordinated school admission arrangements do not apply to in-year admissions / transfer applications.

12. The Bridgend Admission Forum

The local authority is under a statutory duty to establish an admission forum.

The Bridgend Admission Forum is constituted in accordance with Annex D of the statutory School Admissions Code 2013.

The role of the forum is to help ensure that the school admissions system in Bridgend is fair, straightforward and easy for parents/carers to understand. The forum is responsible for monitoring the local authority's compliance with the statutory School Admissions Code 2013 and may advise the local authority on ways in which admission arrangements could be improved.

The terms of reference, meeting minutes and annual reports of the [Bridgend Admission Forum](#) are published on the local authority's website.

13. Additional information

In addition to the sources of information already detailed, the local authority's Starting School Prospectus for 2027-2028 provides additional information on matters associated with school admissions and starting school.

14. Queries

Queries in relation to these arrangements and the admissions registration processes may be directed to Pupil Services as follows:

E-mail: pupilservices@bridgend.gov.uk

Tel No: 01656 642622

Address: Bridgend County Borough Council
Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate
Pupil Services
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

These [arrangements](#) are published on Bridgend County Borough Council's website.

Appendix A - Admission Authority

School	Admission authority
English-medium primary schools	
Abercerdin Primary School	Local authority
Afon y Felin Primary School	Local authority
Betws Primary School	Local authority
Blaengarw Primary School	Local authority
Brackla Primary School	Local authority
Bryncethin Primary School	Local authority
Brynmenyn Primary School	Local authority
Bryntirion Infant School	Local authority
Caerau Primary School	Local authority
Cefn Cribwr Primary School	Local authority
Cefn Glas Infant School	Local authority
Coety Primary School	Local authority
Corneli Primary School	Local authority
Coychurch (Llangrallo) Primary School	Local authority
Croesty Primary School	Local authority
Cwmfelin Primary School	Local authority
Ffaldau Primary School	Local authority
Garth Primary School	Local authority
Litchard Primary School	Local authority
Llangewydd Junior School	Local authority
Llangynwyd Primary School	Local authority
Maes yr Haul Primary School	Local authority
Mynydd Cynffig Primary School	Local authority
Nantffyllon Primary School	Local authority
Nantymoel Primary School	Local authority
Newton Primary School	Local authority
Nottage Primary School	Local authority
Ogmore Vale Primary School	Local authority
Oldcastle Primary School	Local authority
Pencoed Primary School	Local authority

School	Admission authority
Penybont Primary School	Local authority
Pîl Primary School	Local authority
Plasnewydd Primary School	Local authority
Porthcawl Primary School	Local authority
Tondu Primary School	Local authority
Trelales Primary School	Local authority
Tremains Primary School	Local authority
Tynyrheol Primary School	Local authority
West Park Primary School	Local authority
English-medium voluntary controlled primary schools	
Pen y Fai Church in Wales Primary School	Local authority
English-medium voluntary-aided primary schools	
Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School	School governing body
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	School governing body
St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School	School governing body
St Robert's Roman Catholic Primary School	School governing body
Welsh-medium primary schools	
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr	Local authority
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd	Local authority
Ysgol Cynwyd Sant	Local authority
Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr	Local authority
English-medium secondary schools	
Brynteg School	Local authority
Bryntirion Comprehensive School	Local authority
Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen	Local authority
Cynffig Comprehensive School	Local authority
Maesteg School	Local authority
Pencoed Comprehensive School	Local authority
Porthcawl Comprehensive School	Local authority

School	Admission authority
English-medium voluntary-aided secondary schools	
Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School	Governing body
Welsh-medium secondary schools	
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd	Local authority

Appendix B - Admission numbers

Admission numbers for those schools for which the local authority is the admission authority.

The admission number for each school does not apply in respect of nursery classes.

Admission numbers remain under review and may be subject to change prior to the start of the 2027-2028 school year.

School	Published admission number
English-medium primary schools	
Abercerdin Primary School	30
Afon y Felin Primary School	19
Betws Primary School	30
Blaengarw Primary School	24
Brackla Primary School	45
Bryncethin Primary School	35
Brynmenyn Primary School	60
Bryntirion Infant School	40
Caerau Primary School	60
Cefn Cribwr Primary School	20
Cefn Glas Infant School	66
Coety Primary School	60
Corneli Primary School	46
Coychurch (Llangrallo) Primary School	19
Croesty Primary School	30
Cwmfelin Primary School	30
Ffaldau Primary School	30

School	Published admission number
Garth Primary School	30
Litchard Primary School	60
Llangewydd Junior School	90
Llangynwyd Primary School	14
Maes yr Haul Primary School	75
Mynydd Cynffig Primary School	60
Nantffyllon Primary School	40
Nantymoel Primary School	30
Newton Primary School	34
Nottage Primary School	60
Ogmore Vale Primary School	53
Oldcastle Primary School	60
Pencoed Primary School	72
Penybont Primary School	45
Pil Primary School	30
Plasnewydd Primary School	45
Porthcawl Primary School	28
Tondu Primary School	42
Trelales Primary School	30
Tremains Primary School	65
Tynyrheol Primary School	10
West Park Primary School	55
English-medium voluntary controlled primary schools	
Pen y Fai Church in Wales Primary School	30
English-medium voluntary-aided primary schools	
Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School	30
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	30
St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School	25
St Robert's Roman Catholic Primary School	22
Welsh-medium primary schools	

School	Published admission number
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr	54
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd	30
Ysgol Cynwyd Sant	45
Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr	33
English-medium secondary schools	
Brynteg School	333
Bryntirion Comprehensive School	210
Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen	276
Cynffig Comprehensive School	180
Maesteg School	228
Pencoed Comprehensive School	214
Porthcawl Comprehensive School	246
English-medium voluntary-aided secondary schools	
Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School	145
Welsh-medium secondary schools	
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd	165

Proposed Coordinated Admission Arrangements 2027-2028 - Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name:	Coordinated School Admission Arrangements 2027-2028
Department	Education, Early Years and Young People
Service Director	Mr Lindsay Harvey – Corporate Director
Officer Completing the WLIA	Emma Giles, Senior Pupil Services Officer
Email	Emma.Giles@bridgend.gov.uk
Phone	01656 643449
Brief Description	The local authority is required to comply with the statutory requirements of The Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024. The local authority is required to formulate and publish a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all maintained schools, (except school sixth-form places, maintained special schools and maintained nursery schools, but including boarding schools) within Bridgend County Borough Council.
Date	05/11/2024
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Pupils and their families/carers. Schools. The wider community.

<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>The admission of pupils to those schools, for which the local authority is the admission authority and those voluntary-aided schools for which the governing bodies are the admission authorities, will still be processed in accordance with all relevant legislation and in a manner that is fair and timely.</p> <p>The local authority is the admission authority for all Welsh-medium schools in Bridgend.</p>
<p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p>	<p>All pupils for whom education is sought at a school for which the local authority is the admission authority or at a voluntary-aided schools for which the governing bodies are the admission authorities. Therefore, this includes all pupils for whom education through the medium of Welsh is preferred.</p> <p>Schools for which the local authority is the admission authority and those voluntary-aided schools for which the governing bodies are the admission authorities.</p> <p>The wider community.</p>
<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>The ONS recently published the data for the national Census 2021 (Census date 21 March 2021). The 10-year Census provides the most complete information about the Welsh language skills of the population.</p>

	<p>The Census data identifies the following:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1131 268 2040 571"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3" data-bbox="1131 268 2040 308">Welsh Language Skills of the population (%)</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="1131 308 1534 379"></th> <th data-bbox="1534 308 1809 379">Bridgend County Borough</th> <th data-bbox="1809 308 2040 379">Wales</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1131 379 1534 419">Can speak Welsh</td> <td data-bbox="1534 379 1809 419">9%</td> <td data-bbox="1809 379 2040 419">17.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1131 419 1534 496">Can understand spoken Welsh</td> <td data-bbox="1534 419 1809 496">12.4%</td> <td data-bbox="1809 419 2040 496">21.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1131 496 1534 536">Can read Welsh</td> <td data-bbox="1534 496 1809 536">10%</td> <td data-bbox="1809 496 2040 536">16.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1131 536 1534 571">Can write Welsh</td> <td data-bbox="1534 536 1809 571">7.8%</td> <td data-bbox="1809 536 2040 571">14.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="1131 612 2040 756">With regards to combinations of Welsh language skills (for example, can speak Welsh but cannot read or write Welsh), 15.2% of the population of Bridgend identified as having some combination of skills, compared to 24.4% for the whole of Wales.</p> <p data-bbox="1131 798 2040 903">The data shows that there is a gap in the Welsh language skills of the population of Bridgend when compared to the whole of Wales.</p>	Welsh Language Skills of the population (%)				Bridgend County Borough	Wales	Can speak Welsh	9%	17.3%	Can understand spoken Welsh	12.4%	21.3%	Can read Welsh	10%	16.8%	Can write Welsh	7.8%	14.8%
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Other relevant data or research	None.																		

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals. Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh pupils, but not to Welsh speakers.

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>for example, staff, residents and visitors The rights of Welsh speakers and pupils to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Neutral	Every year, the proposed arrangements will be published in Welsh. For the required closed consultation process, there is opportunity for any responses to the consultation to be received and considered in Welsh.	Proposed co-ordinated admission arrangement document and communications with consultees.	None.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers</p> <p>for example, Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / BCBC Five Year Welsh</p>	Neutral	School admissions in Wales is governed by specific legislation and a statutory code, which aims to ensure that admissions to school are fair and timely. The proposed arrangements for 2027-2028 cover the co-ordinated admission arrangements for the admission of pupils to those schools in Bridgend, for which the local authority is the admission authority - this includes all Welsh-medium schools in Bridgend. It also covers admissions for voluntary-aided schools for which the governing bodies are the admission authorities.	<p>Evidence can only be based on the data for the Reception admission rounds, as the co-ordinated admission rounds have not yet come into effect.</p> <p>The percentage of the total applications received for which the expressed first preference school was a Welsh-medium school increased each from September 2019, and remained consistent for September 2023, with a slight dip in 2024 as follows:</p> <p>September 2019 – 9.0% September 2020 – 9.1%</p>	None.

		The proposed arrangements are in accordance with the legislative requirements. The arrangements supports and enables parents/carers to express their school preferences, whether those be for English-medium, voluntary-aided or Welsh - medium schools.	September 2021 – 9.2% September 2022 – 9.3% September 2023 – 9.3% September 2024 – 7.9%	
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</p> <p>for example, status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time.</p>	Neutral	Every year, the proposed arrangements will be published in Welsh. For the required consultation process there is opportunity for any responses to the consultation to be received and considered in Welsh.	Proposed co-ordinated admission arrangement document and communications with consultees.	None.
<p>Compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards</p>	Neutral	The co-ordinated admission arrangements are made available in Welsh every year, both at	Policy documents. Admission application forms.	None.

<p>for example, increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>		<p>the consultation stage and the determination stage. School admission application forms are made available in Welsh every year, and this will be no different for the co-ordinated admission arrangements.</p>	<p>The local authority's website and 'My Account' where parents/carers can apply for a school place online, are bilingual.</p>	
<p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>The co-ordinated admission arrangements will continue to reflect and support the School Admissions Policy in the fundamental right of parents/carers to express their preferences for schools, in accordance with admissions legislation in Wales.</p> <p>There co-ordinated admission arrangements do not impact or change the dedicated oversubscription criteria applicable to Welsh-medium schools. These criteria are no less favourable than those for</p>	<p>Evidence can only be based on the data for the Reception admission rounds, as the co-ordinated admission rounds have not yet come into effect.</p> <p>The percentage of the total applications received for which the expressed first preference school was a Welsh-medium school increased each from September 2019, and remained consistent for September 2023, with a slight dip in 2024 as follows:</p> <p>September 2019 – 9.0%</p>	<p>The local authority is currently working with the Welsh Education Forum (WEF) and through the work of developing the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), to identify the benefits in the development of Welsh-medium school catchment areas.</p>

		oversubscribed English-medium schools or voluntary-aided schools. The arrangements reflect that there are no catchment areas for Welsh-medium schools in Bridgend. However, this does not present a disadvantage for any parent/carer applying for a Welsh-medium school, as proximity to the school is used as the alternative oversubscription criteria.	September 2020 – 9.1% September 2021 – 9.2% September 2022 – 9.3% September 2023 – 9.3% September 2024 – 7.9%	
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Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
The local authority will continue to promote Welsh-medium education via the WEF and through the delivery of the approved WESP	Timescales agreed in the WESP.	The local authority and partners.

<p>Under the Home-to-School Transport Policy, September 2025, there will continue to be an offer of free home-to-school transport for pupils residing over the statutory distance of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two miles for primary school pupils • three miles for secondary school pupils and • over 1.5 miles for Nursery pupils to their nearest Welsh-medium school. 	Ongoing.	The local authority.
<p>Progress a strong School Modernisation Programme with a significant increase in the number and availability of Welsh-medium nursery and primary school places across Bridgend.</p>	<p>In line with the delivery of the Band B of the School Modernisation Programme outlined in the approved WESP.</p>	
<p>If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.</p>		
<p>What was identified?</p>	<p>Why is it not possible?</p>	
<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	

Stage 4 – Review

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services – WLS@bridgend.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@bridgend.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built-in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

Ongoing data analysis and reporting in respect of school admissions. An annual report is required by legislation and all co-ordinated admission arrangements are sent to Welsh Government by 28 February in the determination year.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts.

Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language – neutral impact.

Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers – neutral impact.

Opportunities to promote the Welsh language – neutral impact.

The local authority's compliance with the statutory Welsh Language Standards – neutral impact.

Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language – neutral impact.

No additional actions have been taken to better contribute to more positive impacts since the consultation on the proposed arrangements (which was undertaken in accordance with the Education (Co-ordination of School Admission Arrangements and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2024, the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 and the statutory School Admissions Code 2013).

Stage 7 – Sign off			
Name of Officer completing WLIA	Emma Giles	Service Director name:	Lindsay Harvey
Position	Senior Pupil Services Officer	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
Signature	<i>ESGiles</i>	Service Director Signature	
Date	05/11/2024	Date	

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	JONATHAN PARSONS – GROUP MANAGER PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The report content has no direct effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p style="text-align: center;">This report will provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council’s current and potential future strategic transport projects including active travel schemes and seek approval for schemes to go forward for local, regional or national funding and any future phases of the South East Wales Metro programme or any other funding or delivery mechanism.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The projects identified will also form the basis of Bridgend strategic transport priorities in discussions with Welsh Government (WG), Transport for Wales (TfW), Network Rail (NR) and Cardiff Capital Region Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with an update of the Council’s current and potential future strategic transport projects and seek authorisation for schemes to go forward for any future phases of Metro or other national, regional and local funding applications.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) through its Metro programme, together with Welsh Government (WG), provide the principal funding mechanism for large strategic transport projects within the region. A currently funded project includes the Porthcawl Metrolink bus facility, which has been completed and became operational on 18th November 2024. Active travel schemes rely primarily on WG funding (managed by Transport for Wales) and the programme is prioritised separately as part of the regular active travel network map approval process. This report contains a re-prioritised active travel programme for the 2025-26 financial year driven by grant funding rules issued by TfW.

- 2.2 Other transport infrastructure projects (including active travel and highway improvements) may be funded by developer contributions (through Section 106 planning agreements), by other grant funding initiatives and on occasions support from within the Authority. Future funding opportunities may also come forward through UK Government.
- 2.3 Cabinet approved the current list of strategic transport schemes on 20 October 2023 and by way of this report Cabinet is advised of an updated list of proposed projects and schemes. It is essential that a list of schemes is agreed in order that they may be submitted as part of any current or future transport funding bids and also in the event that surplus funding is available from Welsh Government towards the end of the financial year. A recognised and approved list of schemes is also necessary when identifying projects that could be promoted when seeking developer contributions through Section 106 planning (S106) agreements relating to infrastructure improvements.
- 2.4 The identified projects would also be promoted with the related public transport bodies i.e., Welsh Government (WG), Transport for Wales (TfW), Network Rail (NR), and the UK Government when discussing rail and public transport priorities.
- 2.5 It should be noted that these schemes represent the main strategic transport projects currently underway or being proposed for future advancement and do not necessarily include other projects or schemes/enhancements that may come forward or are negotiated through the normal development control or land-use planning processes.
- 2.6 Cabinet are also advised that the schemes outlined below, with the exception of the Porthcawl Metrolink and the Active Travel programme, do not currently have any Council approved capital or revenue funding. The ability to progress these projects will therefore be dependent on the necessary resources, funding and budget being secured. It should also be noted that with any scheme that comes forward there will be a future maintenance liability as well as potential impacts on existing infrastructure. As such schemes will be developed in consultation with the relevant internal teams and officers.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1.1 The current and proposed schemes are listed below in no particular order and have been included in terms of their compliance with national, regional, and local policies as outlined below.

3.1.2 National policy includes Future Wales 2040 - The National Plan (FW2040)

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf>

Llybyr Newydd - The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 (WTS),

https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/llybyr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021-full-strategy_0.pdf

Planning Policy Wales 12(PPW12).

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-07/planning-policy-wales-edition-12.pdf>

Regional and local policy comprises:

Replacement Bridgend Local Development Plan (RLDP),

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/development-planning/replacement-bridgend-local-development-plan-2018-to-2033/>

Bridgend Local Transport Plan (LTP),

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/4087/bridgend-ltp-wg-approved-version-may-2015-2030.pdf>

Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), Regional Transport Authority (RTA), South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC) priorities.

<https://www.cardiffcapitalregion.wales/the-city-deal/>

- 3.1.3 The report of the independent panel appointed by Welsh Government entitled 'The Future of Road Investment in Wales i.e. 'The Roads Review' is of relevance.

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-02/the-future-road-investment-wales.pdf>

This report together with the Welsh Government response sets out the current national policy towards new road building and improvement in Wales.

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/2/2/1676385038/welsh-government-response-roads-review.pdf>

- 3.1.4 The inclusion of each scheme should be based on criteria outlined in the strategies highlighted above. Consideration must therefore be given to the impacts that the following schemes will have on delivering local and regional economic, environmental and safety objectives as well as allocation in the LTP, LDP and compliance with regional and national policy aims and objectives.
- 3.1.5 Regional Transport Plan.
- 3.1.6 In April 2025 a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) was formed to provide regional governance and strategic policy for the South East Wales region. Other CJs have been similarly set up to cover other regions in Wales. The South East Wales region comprises 10 local authorities including Bridgend County Borough Council. The administrative functions of the CJC have been amalgamated with the CCR and

a separate committee established to oversee the development of a Regional Transport Plan (RTP). A separate Committee will oversee the development of a regional Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

- 3.1.7 Work on the RTP has commenced and it is likely that a draft plan will be published for public consultation some time in 2025. Local authorities are able to submit schemes of regional significance for inclusion in the RTP where they will be assessed against national and local policy and scored accordingly. If approved the schemes outlined below could be put forward for consideration.

3.2 **Strategic Transport Schemes currently in progress**

- 3.2.1 The following schemes are those that already have capital funding and/or current funding from Welsh Government / CCR or are being proposed for inclusion in next year's funding programme. At present this consists entirely of active travel. The Porthcawl Metrolink has benefitted from funding from CCR & UKG but has now been completed.

3.3 **Active Travel Programme**

- 3.3.1 The Active Travel Programme is an ongoing multi-million project that is funded through Welsh Government and subject to an annual grant bidding process. Bids for schemes are submitted annually and are approved on the basis that they are delivered during one financial year and it is not always possible that projects can undergo feasibility, detailed design and implementation within the timescales allowed. As such projects may have to be phased over several years i.e. year 1 - feasibility work, year 2 - design and finally year 3 implementation. The Active Travel programme is the largest ongoing strategic transport commitment and is considered as being essential to encouraging a 'modal shift' from reliance on private motor vehicles to sustainable modes such as walking and cycling.

- 3.3.2 The funding is separated into those that cover specific projects and other projects that may fall into 'core' schemes. The programme is subject to strict scrutiny by WG and quarterly spending returns are required. Some approved funding may be rolled over to subsequent years by agreement and surplus funds are occasionally offered out to local authorities to develop schemes.

- 3.3.3 Active Travel funding also requires that the route offered for grant funding be included in the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM), which was approved on 3rd August 2022 by Welsh Government. The map may be viewed online:-

<https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/active-travel-network-maps/>

- 3.3.4 The ATNM combines the Existing Routes Map (ERM) and Integrated Network Map (INM) required by the Active Travel (Wales) Act. Existing Routes are those that meet the requirements of the Active Travel design guidance and are audited by Sustrans and other authorised third parties collaboratively. Some routes might not fully comply with the guidance but may still get funds from other funding sources for construction. Future Routes are routes that are planned for future developments and continuous improvement of the network. The location and details are indicative and subject to changes as schemes develop. The delivery of these routes depends

on the level of available funding and the complexity of planning and design required for larger and more complex routes.

- 3.3.5 The Ynysawdre Active Travel scheme was the only capital project for 2023/24 and was completed on time and under budget. The scheme provides an active travel design compliant traffic-free shared use active travel route from Ynysawdre (Lon Derw) to the National Cycle Network. It is referenced in the Council's Active Travel Annual Report 2023-24 which has been submitted to Welsh Government.
- 3.3.6 Under revised grant guidance from Welsh Government, only one capital active travel scheme can be submitted per local authority for funding in 2025-26 financial year. In keeping with previous years, the Council has been allocated a hypothecated budget to fund what the Welsh Government describes as 'Core' active travel schemes. 'Core' schemes fall into two broad categories, namely: scheme development schemes; and minor works. Under the former category, only three schemes can be submitted to the tune of no more than 40% of the allocated budget whilst under the latter category, at least 60% of the allocated budget should be spent. Accordingly, the Council has revised and re-prioritised the active travel schemes that will be submitted for funding for the 2025-26 financial year. The other active travel schemes reported to Cabinet on 20 October 2023 remain as Council priorities although not listed in any particular order. Below are the active travel schemes proposed to be submitted for funding.
- 3.3.7 It is proposed that the Main Capital Scheme to go forward for 2025/26 WG funding is Pen-y-Fai Phase 1. The aim is to construct a shared pedestrian and cycle track from the safe crossing point along Tondu Road, providing a key corridor for sustainable travel into the Bridgend town centre. Work will also be carried out to improve the A4063 Pen-Y-Fai Junction. This scheme has undergone considerable engagement with TFW as well as the community and local Member.
- 3.3.8 The Core Development Schemes proposed to go forward for 2025/26 funding are as follows:-
- Feasibility report on options completed. Agreed to review options from new proposed Ysgol Bro Ogwr (YGBO) Primary School along Princess way to Tremains Road/Brackla Street (Bridgend Town centre). Also look at options from YGBO School to Wyndham Crescent Brackla.
 - Penyfai Phase 2 - Commence outline design of the main route south of the junction into Bridgend town centre.
 - Danygraig: Investigate active travel options from Danygraig Roundabout A4106 to newly opened Porthcawl Metrolink. Incorporate local facilities such as schools, skateboard park and open green spaces.
- 3.3.9 The Minor Works Schemes proposed to go forward for 2025/26 funding are as follows:-

- A48: Improve the link from Picton Court roundabout along Heronston Lane to Ewenny Roundabout.
- A programme of dropped kerbs at various locations in the County Borough.
- Active Travel Route Monitoring (Data Collection): To install cycle counters at various locations to collect user data, and continue to monitor counters already installed at various sites.

3.3.10 There are other active travel priorities identified by the Council, which are unable to be put forward for funding for the coming financial year. These schemes remain important to the active travel programme although there is no funding identified to take them forward at this time. Nevertheless, it is vital that they remain on the list of schemes as they constitute the remainder of the Council's strategic active travel programme and in the event that alternative funding becomes available. These are listed below.

- South Cornelly ATR (Pyle Phase 2) – Funding has been granted to complete design and prepare Tender documentation. The scheme aims to provide an active travel route (ATR) starting at the Heol-Y-Splot/A4229 roundabout, along Porthcawl Road and the B4283 to North Cornelly. The route forms part of a wider strategy to develop and implement an ATR between Pyle to Porthcawl. Further funding will be required for route implementation.
- A48 ATR scheme: Feasibility studies of the active travel route identified along the A48 between Ewenny Road roundabout and Laleston roundabout. Further funding will be required for detailed design and implementation. There may be funding through S106 when the Island Farm strategic site comes forward.
- Brackla to Bridgend (Merthyr Mawr Bridge): this relates to the design of an active travel route utilising the under pass to Merthyr Mawr Road and redesign of the footbridge over the River Ogmore leading from Church Road to Angel Street. Further funding will be required for route implementation.
- Active Travel Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvements: To carry out an audit of pedestrian crossing points at areas of concern and with reference to the County Borough-wide active travel consultation in 2021. The audit will identify the most critical pedestrian crossing deficiencies and provide, re-locate or improve them on a priority order basis. The implementation of the scheme will be subject to future funding bids.
- Bridgend Town Centre Access Enhancements: Develop feasibility and design for active travel enhancements to improve connectivity and improve links to the relocated Bridgend College campus when complete as well as general town centre

access. This is also identified as part of the wider Bridgend Railway Station enhancement as described below.

- Dock Street, Porthcawl: This is a Regeneration led project and will include enhanced active travel links between the Metrolink bus facility and Porthcawl town centre along Dock Street, to promote active travel and improve connectivity and permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. This scheme will be crucial to the future use of the Porthcawl Metrolink.
- Pencoed to Rhondda Cynon Taff boundary (RCT) - Cross-border link: This relates to the provision of a seamless continuation of safe active travel routes from Pencoed to RCT. Further funding will be required for full design and implementation.
- Maesteg to Bridgend (Llynfi Valley): Llynfi Valley – Maesteg, Garth, Llangynywd and Cwmfelin. Feasibility for providing a north-south active travel route will enhance connectivity for the residents of the Llynfi valley. The proposed route will link into the National Cycle Network (NCN) and complement proposals to build a passing loop on the railway line at Tondu to increase frequency on the existing railway line.
- Pyle to Porthcawl (Phase 2): The scheme will comprise a Toucan Crossing (Pyle to Porthcawl Phase 2) on A4229 at the northern end of South Cornelly and another Toucan Crossing on the A4229 at the southern end of South Cornelly.
- Bridgend to Porthcawl: Providing active travel route along A4106 Bridgend Road between Porthcawl and Bridgend. The proposal is for scheme development funding to progress the outcome of WelTAG 2 study completed in 2023. If the scheme is proven feasible then future funding applications could be made for a full design and implementation.
- Garw Valley Community Route: This relates to an upgrade programme for the National cycle Network (NCN) route between Bryngarw House and Pontycymer. The route upgrading is also subject to ongoing discussions with Network Rail (NR), which owns much of the land. At the moment part of the route has been closed by NR due to safety reasons and will require the upgrading of bridge decks and cutting back of vegetation to allow public use to continue. The cost of these works is likely to be in the region of £35,000. This may be raised through current active travel funding mechanisms although some assurances on the long term future of the route will be required in order progress. In the longer term, if the Council were to take on the lease from NR, there will be significant future maintenance liability issues in taking on full responsibility for the route. A full survey of the route will be required in order to assess the capital cost of any upgrading and estimates of future maintenance costs, which will fall to current budgets and potential options are being discussed including national and regional funding streams. Nevertheless, the route remains highly important to the Garw Valley communities and visitors. It provides

local active travel links between community facilities as well as a very popular recreational facility. Some commitment from the Council is necessary in order to make progress with WG and TfW in terms of securing future funding and it is proposed that subject to extensive survey work and legal investigations that the Cabinet acknowledges the importance of the route and approves in principle the short term works necessary to make the route safe and taking on the lease to ensure its long term security. A separate report will be brought to Cabinet setting out in detail the costs and resource implications associated with taking on the lease for the route and how they will be funded.

- Active Travel Safety Enhancements: The access barrier auditing work has already been undertaken. This work included Technology Drive and all the existing routes in Bridgend, Pyle and Porthcawl. A total of 56 barriers have so far been identified and other routes in Pencoed and Maesteg will also be audited.
- Bridgend (Coity Gyratory) to Designer Village: Options analysis and feasibility design for an Active Travel Link between the Princess of Wales Hospital to Bridgend Town Centre. This scheme has now been superseded by the proposed route along Princess Way, and Meadow Rise in Brackla, The recommendation to amend the route was made in consultation with TfW on the grounds that Bridgend (Coity Gyratory) to Designer Village route was not feasible to build due to land availability issues and accommodating an active travel route to national standards. The alternative route, whilst not as direct, will provide the same outcome and may be achieved with minimal land acquisition. Part of this scheme is proposed to be put forward as one of the three 'core' development schemes for the next financial year as indicated above.

3.3.11 Merlin Crescent Active Travel Scheme. This scheme formed part of a wider Bryntirion active travel proposal, intended to enhance pedestrian and cycle access to Bryntirion Comprehensive as well as improving the active travel infrastructure for future strategic development within the area and for other local journeys. Feasibility and design work was carried for the active travel route along Merlin Crescent and public consultation and engagement sessions undertaken. However, this drew a negative reaction to this proposal and public petition opposing the scheme was submitted along with concerns from local Members and Senedd Member. In view of the considerable level of opposition it was not considered appropriate to include the scheme as part of next year's funding bid. As such it is proposed to defer the scheme from the current programme whilst further public and political consensus is sought. A report on the public engagement is attached as **Appendix A.**

3.4 **Porthcawl Metrolink**

3.4.1 The Porthcawl Metrolink which comprises a new purpose-built, enclosed bus facility located within the Porthcawl Regeneration Area at Salt Lake became operational on 18th November 2024. The Metrolink was developed with strategic funds from CCR, WG and UKG under the South East Wales Metro Programme. The glass and steel structure provides capacity for four buses and features a green roof, rain garden and internal seating. It will provide the necessary public transport infrastructure for

the future regeneration of Porthcawl, which includes residential, commercial and recreational uses. A formal opening event will be arranged in due course.

3.5 Proposed Strategic Transport Projects

3.5.1 The following projects are put forward for approval as part of any future applications to the Cardiff Capital Region Metro Programme, Levelling Up Fund, or other funding opportunities as well as the basis for discussion with other outside transport bodies on national and regional strategic transport priorities. The schemes will also be considered for inclusion in the forthcoming CCR Regional Transport Plan (RTP). Whilst there is currently no specific funding or budget in place for these schemes it is important that they are recognised and approved in the event that any future funding opportunities are forthcoming.

3.6 Brackla Halt Railway Station

3.6.1 This is a longstanding proposal for a new station facility on the South Wales mainline between Bridgend and Pencoed and serving the large residential area of Brackla and Coychurch as well as Bridgend Industrial Estate. The proposal will also include enhanced active travel provision connecting the residential hinterland with the industrial estate and town centre to the south.

3.6.2 As well as the station, a car park has been constructed (although not in use) and a new active travel bridge is being considered that would form an essential link between Brackla and Bridgend Industrial Estate. The bridge may also be pursued through the current active travel programme independently of the new station proposals. It is envisaged that a new station would form part of the South-East Wales Metro along with the existing local Pyle, Bridgend and Pencoed stations.

3.6.3 There are no current TfW proposals to take this project further and it is not identified as a priority within the CCR transport programme, however, it is possible to seek funding to look at the feasibility of the active travel bridge and connections within the area as part of wider active travel enhancements.

3.7 Bridgend Railway Station enhancement

3.7.1 This is a Regeneration led project, which aims to improve access and enhance park and ride options, active travel, a bus interchange facility and active travel improvements. This forms part of the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan but could also be considered as a strategic transport project in itself alongside the Town Centre Access Enhancements project described above. The project would also look at the feasibility of enhanced bus connections and infrastructure within the town centre.

3.8 Ewenny Road (Maesteg) Interchange and Llynfi valley Line

3.8.1 The Ewenny Road Interchange was identified as part of the WeITAG Stage 2 study into the Maesteg line enhancement project currently undertaken by Transport for Wales (TfW). An internal feasibility bid has previously provided funding to carry out preliminary feasibility studies to complement the WeITAG (Welsh Government Transport Appraisal Guidance) process. The scheme is expected to include a park

& ride facility, electric vehicle charging facility, bus stops, covered cycle parking and taxi rank adjacent to the existing Ewenny Road rail station.

- 3.8.2 The interchange is also directly adjacent to the Ewenny Road regeneration site, a major mixed use residential and commercial scheme with outline planning approval. The interchange would provide an excellent opportunity to further develop transit orientated development (TOD). The principle of TOD is to provide residential and other development around public transport hubs as a way of reducing reliance on the private car and encouraging 'modal shift'.
- 3.8.3 The project would initially take the proposal to design stage but with suitable funding could be fully implemented. Furthermore, the facility, which would have transport benefits to the wider Llynfi Valley, has sufficient critical mass to be pursued independently of any future regeneration plans for the adjoining, former industrial site.
- 3.8.4 The WelTAG study is still being considered but whilst enhancements to the Llynfi Valley line also remain a priority for the Council this is a matter for TfW along with NR to determine.

3.9 Ford Branch Line

- 3.9.1 The branch line opened to serve the Ford Engine factory at Waterton but is no longer in use following the plant's closure in 2020. The rail head is located within the plant itself but the associated level crossing across the A48 has been closed. The track bed remains on the line, which crosses into the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough (VOG). Whilst it will require significant upgrading, the reopening of the line as a heavy rail or light rail tram train alternative with connection to Bridgend and VOG lines could still in theory be developed.
- 3.9.2 The site has now been sold and the owners are in consultation with the Council regarding the future development of the land. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the rail link within the site will form part of any proposals going forward. However, branch line remains and could potentially provide the basis for a future transport scheme in conjunction with VOG.

3.10 Heol Simonston / Coychurch Road Junction Improvements

- 3.10.1 The improvement of the Heol Simonston / Coychurch Road junction has long been identified as a key highway improvement project. Although not identified as a specific priority in the LDP or LTP, there is a significant local congestion problem at this location. The key issue in this project is to overcome highway safety issues generated by traffic congestion at this pinch point as well as the provision of active travel links between the residential areas to the north of the railway line and key employment sites to the south.
- 3.10.2 One of the main constraints in the area is the railway bridge over the B4181 Coychurch Rod/Heol Simonston, which carries the mainline railway line which narrows considerably at this point. The bridge is also a Grade II Listed Building due to its architectural and historic interest as part of the original Victorian railway.

Notwithstanding the important heritage issues which would need to be overcome, work to replace the bridge and realign the road would be a considerable undertaking with a very high financial and operational cost and as such other options are being considered.

3.10.3 A feasibility study of the junction was originally undertaken in 2007 to assess the suitability of the Heol Simonston / Coychurch Road Junction for the incorporation of a roundabout. The purpose of the scheme was to accommodate increased traffic flows generated from the Coed Castell Development off Coychurch Road and improve the operation of the existing junction. Several options were considered at the time.

3.10.4 It should also be noted that since the 2007 study there has been significant changes to legislation and national policy i.e. The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, which places a duty on local authorities to prioritise walking and cycle routes over car-based transport along with the recent Welsh Government Roads review, which impacts on the amount of national funding is available for new road schemes. These changes in legislation and policy direction will significantly influence any future scheme(s) coming forward. Although some S106 funding is available to undertake feasibility for active travel solutions within the locality (see active travel schemes above), no funding to design, complete or undertake any works has been identified as of yet. Internal resourcing issues will also impact on the progress of the project, however, options and alternatives will be reconsidered and Members will be updated in due course.

3.11 Junction 36 (M4)

3.11.1 A number of assessments and reports (e.g. the Welsh Government 'pinch point' study) have been undertaken over recent years and have evidenced that Junction 36 has reached its operational capacity limit and there are significant queue lengths on all of the six junction approaches during peak periods. A WelTAG Stage 2 report commissioned by WG was undertaken to consider the efficiency, capacity and congestion issues that impact on this key node's ability to perform its strategic function. This situation will restrict future growth in the north of the County Borough and disadvantage those who are most affected by this major constraint to movement.

3.11.2 The provision of a safe, attractive, and extensive active travel network will improve local accessibility, giving residents the opportunity to walk and cycle to nearby services and facilities, whilst improved access to public transport services will enable residents to travel to employment opportunities further afield. Whilst these measures will increase sustainable transport use which will help release some capacity at J36 they are unlikely to fully resolve the problems due to the current physical constraints and as such major infrastructure intervention will be required.

3.11.3 However, the recent WG Roads Review report has halted any further progress on motorway junction improvement to improve traffic congestion. Without any significant changes to the current junction infrastructure this national approach has a corresponding impact on any proposal for bus and active travel enhancement. Without significant infrastructure investment any future active travel improvements at the junction could further exacerbate congestion and as such would be limited to improving connectivity within the surrounding area.

3.11.4 It is noted that the current activities at J36 including the Designer Outlet, hotels, superstore, restaurant, and cinema, is a significant employer within the County Borough and as such any improvements in active travel to and from the facilities could encourage modal shift and use of active travel with a corresponding benefit in reducing car-based congestion.

3.12 **Metro Enhancement Framework (MEF)**

3.12.1 A Metro Enhancement Framework (MEF) has been prepared to enable Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, and the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority to start developing the pipeline of future transport projects that can be delivered to further complement the existing commitments being delivered as part of the Metro and Metro Plus programme. As part of the MEF, Transport for Wales have appointed Arcadis to prepare a WelTAG Stage one study. Its purpose is to help identify areas and 'transport corridors' where transport solutions could address the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFGA) goals. Thirteen transport corridors were initially identified across the South Wales Metro area and scored against a set of 14 criteria.

3.12.2 The highest scoring corridors to be progressed within this study were Maesteg / Porthcawl / Bridgend to Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. These corridors demonstrate the existing and future social, environmental, cultural, and economic challenges and the areas include the Ewenny Road Interchange and the Porthcawl Metrolink described above.

3.13 **Penprysg Road Bridge**

3.13.1 This project is a longstanding strategic land use and transport commitment for the Council as evidenced in proposed, current and previous development plans and the LTP. At present there is a moratorium in place on the development of Pencoed north of the crossing due to traffic congestion caused by an inadequate, narrow road bridge combined with the regular closing of the level crossing restricting north-south access. A working group was set up comprising local representatives, politicians, Council officers, UK government, TFW and Network Rail. The project involves the replacement of the sub-standard Penprysg Road bridge, closure of Pencoed Level Crossing and its replacement with a fully accessible active travel bridge. It is also considered that the project will bring economic, environmental and public realm enhancements to the centre of Pencoed once the level crossing has been removed. It should be noted that any further frequency of services along the mainline could lead to further congestion issues if the frequency of level crossing closure is increased.

3.13.2 Using funds from the CCR Metro Plus project, a WelTAG Stage 2 study was carried out in August 2020, working with Network Rail and other partners, to try and find a long-term solution to this problem. The WelTag Stage Two study concluded that a combination of two options should be progressed to WelTAG Stage 3. This would see the provision of a new active travel bridge over the railway, adjacent to the station, and the permanent closure of the level crossing. The bridge would be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. To facilitate the level crossing

closure, Penprysg Road Bridge would also be rebuilt as a two-lane carriageway to increase its capacity in both directions. The new bridge would also be compatible with any future line electrification proposals. A public consultation exercise took place in late 2021 and there is widespread local support for the project. Network Rail (NR) which controls the line and track infrastructure are also supportive of the closure of the level crossing on rail safety grounds.

- 3.13.3 Recently as part of a TFW project, Pencoed was appraised and developed to WeITAG Stage 2 at programme-level via a Bridgend-Pontyclun study. TFW will be developing a project-level WeITAG Stage 2 Outline Business Case focusing on Pencoed and Llanharan Interchanges alone. This will include further optioneering (the potential for do minimum – intermediate – high ambition options) as well as commensurate concept design development for the preferred option.
- 3.13.4 However, this TFW exercise does not include any design development for the Penprysg Level Crossing scheme and replacement road bridge. Whilst the current design is predicated on the Level Crossing Closure coming to fruition, it is likely that the do-minimum and intermediate ambition options will also explore scenarios where the level crossing closure does not come to fruition soon, but which do not impinge on its subsequent development in the future, should funding prospects improve. Alongside the business case, optioneering and design development on the Interchanges at Pencoed and Llanharan, TFW will also be looking to develop Station Network Plans for both Pencoed and Llanharan, assessing first-and-last mile routes between the interchanges and key trip attractors/conurbations in the areas.
- 3.13.5 The project was identified by Cabinet as the transport project bid under the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) programme and a bid for £25 million was submitted in August 2022. However, as it could not be adequately demonstrated that the project could not be delivered within the funding timeframe, unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful. Whilst a large amount of essential feasibility work has been undertaken since 2020, there is still considerable work to be undertaken including developing a sound economic case as well as undertaking a full technical design. The project is not currently supported by any regional funding programme, however, future funding options are still being considered.

3.14 **Pyle Railway Station Relocation and Park and Ride.**

- 3.14.1 The existing station at Pyle was developed as part of the revitalisation of local railway infrastructure in the early 1990s. However, it has significant land and infrastructure constraints that impact on current and future park and ride enhancements and therefore a relocation further east will be required if the facility is to be expanded into a strategic regional facility. An initial feasibility study has already been carried out in 2020, which indicated that the relocated station would cost around £20 million (at that time).
- 3.14.2 This scheme is intended to enhance the public transport accessibility profile of the strategic development land at Pyle included as part of the RLDP. This site comprises of approximately 2,000 houses and associated commercial and educational development. Existing communities along the Pyle-Porthcawl corridor will benefit and there is further opportunity for a park and ride facility to service Porthcawl. Currently, there are active travel links being developed in the area and

relocating the Pyle railway station would facilitate the integration of land use and multi-modal transport as well as promoting transit orientated development. (TOD)

3.14.3 The moving of Pyle Railway Station is a large-scale engineering undertaking for which there is no current funding to progress design or land acquisition. As such the project could also include exploring interim measures to improve the facilities at the current station in conjunction with TFW.

3.15 Rapid Bus Infrastructure

3.15.1 Rapid bus systems refer to bus-based public transport, which is designed to have better capacity and be more efficient than conventional bus routes that use the normal highway infrastructure. They typically include roadways that are dedicated to buses, giving priority to buses at intersections/junctions and where buses may interact with other traffic. These systems could be utilised more flexibly in areas that are not well served by rail and provide faster bus journeys from residential to commercial centres and employment bases.

3.15.2 The project would look at feasibility of introducing these systems in the Garw and Ogmore Valleys as part of the South-East Wales Metro as well as a review of the current rail stations in the Valley Gateway area that could be utilised for enhanced park & ride and interchange facilities. In the Pyle to Porthcawl travel corridor this project could include dedicated bus lanes and/or bus gates at congested junctions and be developed to complement and enhance the Metrolink bus facility in Porthcawl.

3.15.3 The emphasis for future bus related schemes would be on the use of ultra-low emission vehicles to meet carbon reduction targets. However, the development of this project will be dependent on the available bus resource and operator constraints going forward.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report, however, the development of active travel routes and public transport options also aims to reduce dependency on carbon intensive transport options.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The work on the Porthcawl Metrolink project has been funded by the Welsh Government Local Transport Fund which is administered under the Cardiff City Region's Metro Programme. Additional funding was provided from the Council's capital programme. The Active Travel programme is similarly funded through Welsh Government grants. As such these projects already are or will form part of the capital programme if funding is forthcoming.

8.2 Any future approved schemes will be subject to separate funding bids. Potential sources of funding for future technical work and construction include Section 106 planning contributions, Welsh Government grants, UK Government grants, Cardiff Capital Region Metro and City Deal initiatives.

8.3 The Council will need to fully explore future funding options and at this stage any match funding requirements or financial commitments from the Council on individual projects is unknown. Future reports will be brought to Cabinet with updates on funding bids. Any future capital schemes will need to be presented and approved by Council for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Considers the information contained within this report and notes the progress on the Active Travel Programme and Porthcawl Metrolink.
2. Approves the list of active travel projects outlined above in paragraphs 3.3.7 – 3.3.9 to go forward as schemes for Capital Projects, Core Development Schemes and Minor Works Scheme as bid in the 2025/26 WG funding programme.
3. Defers further work on the Merlin Crecent Active Travel scheme pending further development work and consultation.
4. Approves the proposed active travel and strategic transport projects as identified above to be included as part of any future applications to the Cardiff Capital Region or other funding opportunities as well as inclusion in the Regional Transport Plan.
5. Approves the projects identified above to form the basis for discussion with other outside transport bodies on national and regional strategic transport priorities.
6. Approves in principle the works required to allow the Garw Valley Community Route to return to operational use in the short term subject to funding and in

principle to take on the lease and operational control of the route in the longer term subject to an extensive site investigation, costings being prepared, budgets identified and reported back to Cabinet for formal approval.

7. Note that any future capital schemes will need to be presented to Council for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

Background documents

Bridgend County Borough Council's Active Travel Annual Report 2023-24

BCBC ACTIVE TRAVEL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORTS:

MERLIN CRESCENT - BRYNTIRION



NOVEMBER 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report presents the outcome of the recent community engagement undertaken as part of the active travel plans through Merlin Crescent. The proposed scheme will be a segregated foot/cycle path along with dropped kerbs in selected localities through Bryntirion and Cefn Glas.
- 1.0.2 There are three sets of data compiled from three different engagement sessions to gain an understanding of the public's views and opinions on the Merlin Crescent scheme. The three sessions were:
- Pupil Engagement Session – 22nd of May 2024. This was an hour from 14:00 until 15:00 with pupils and enthusiastic staff from Bryntirion Comprehensive School. The purpose of this approach was to gain insight into the views pupils have towards sustainable transport/active travel.
 - In-person Community Engagement – 15th of July 2024. This was 16:30 until 19:00 for residents to drop into Bryntirion Comprehensive School and discuss the proposals with officers. This was to gain all user resident opinions. 40 people completed a survey at the in-person session.
 - Online Survey - The survey was advertised and released online for a two-week period from the 29th of July 2024 to 12th August 2024. This was recommended by a local member to get interest from those in surrounding areas of Bridgend and those who could not attend the in-person session resulting in a larger response rate. This proved to be a beneficial decision creating a further 98 responses.
- 1.0.3 Local Councillors were present at both the In-person Engagement Session and the Pupil Engagement. The Leader, Luke Fletcher MS and the cabinet member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing were also present at the In-person Engagement Session. The same survey was used for both of these with the results combined in this report for analysis, this survey can be seen in Appendix A. A petition has also been raised with the points being addressed in the latter stages of the document (Chapter 4).

1.1 SCHEME OVERVIEW

- 1.1.1 The scheme consists of three phases, color-coded as blue, red, and orange (please see attachment on page 4).

Phase 1 (**Blue**): Establishes an active travel link along Merlin Crescent, near Bryntirion Comprehensive School. Phase 1 can be seen in-depth in Appendix B at the end of the report, this general arrangement was also shown at the engagement session.

Phase 2 (**Red**): Complements the active travel link along Merlin Crescent, developed concurrently with Phase 1.

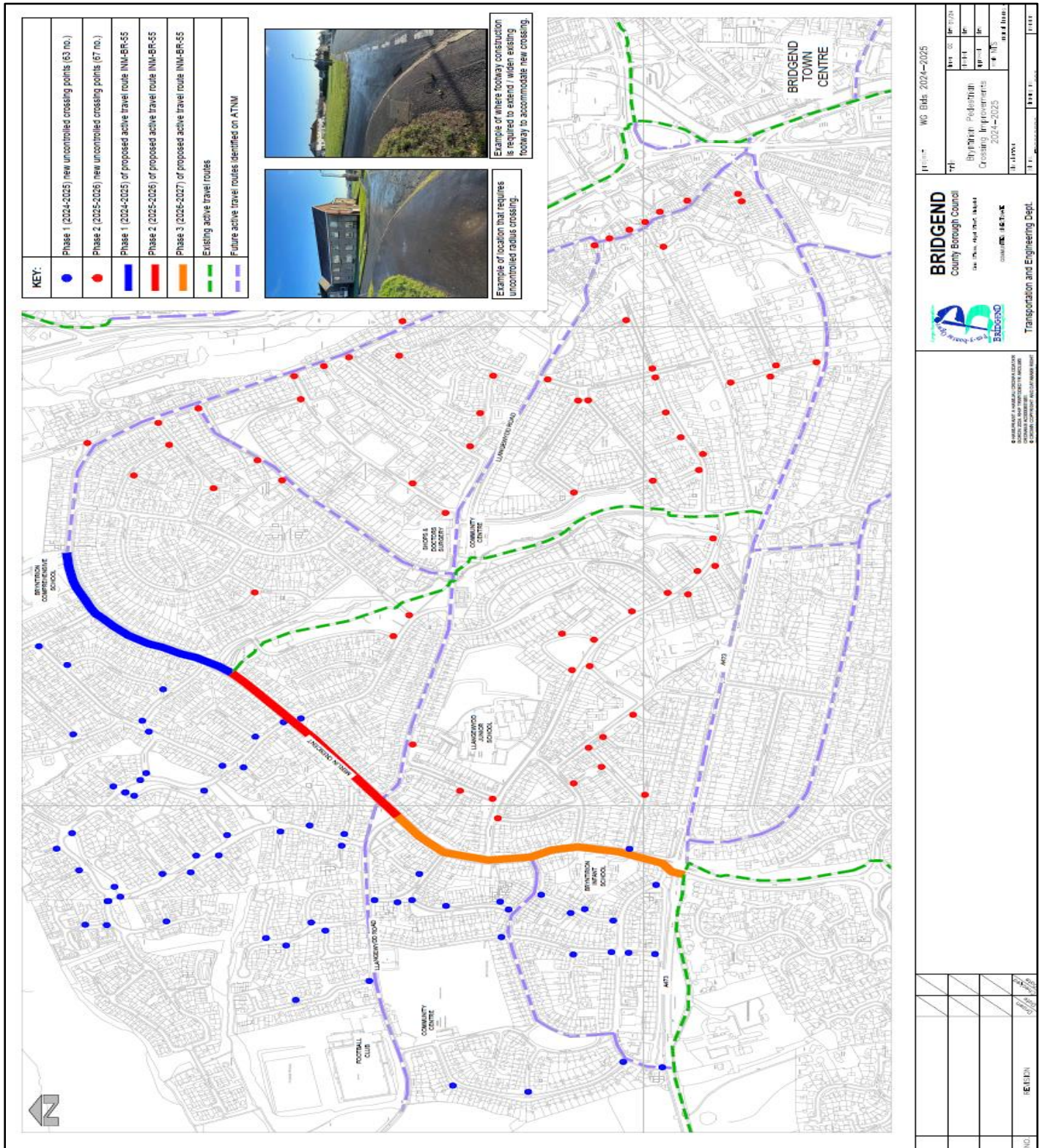
Phase 3 (**Orange**): Represents subsequent years to complete the entire active travel route.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME:

- Create a partially segregated walking and cycling route from the existing active travel network map (ATNM) to Bryntirion Comprehensive School.

- Form widened access throughout the community, benefiting school journeys, local shops, amenities, and bus stops.
- Create prioritisation of active travel over motorized vehicles by providing safe off-road facilities, reducing carbon emissions.
- Focus on the scheme's alignment with local and national policies, including the Local Transport Plan, Well-Being Plan, and Net Zero Carbon Strategy.

A section of the route comes with a challenging gradient which has been highlighted by a road safety audit. The issues raised by this audit have been taken into account in the design of the route and measures put in place to ameliorate them. The scheme therefore meets all other active travel act design guidance (ATAG) requirements including junction priority for walkers and cyclists.



2.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2.0.1 Chapter 2 contains the results of the in-person engagement session and the online survey both of which consist of the same information, the outcomes have then been combined for analysis. The survey contains 4 questions and the results for each question can be seen from Section 2.2 to 2.5. There was a total of 138 participants who filled out the survey (combining both online and in-person).
- 2.0.2 Each question starts with a table, which is the raw results that have been tallied by an officer. A clustered column chart is then presented to bring this table to life. Finally, each question finishes with a pie chart that shows the combined results and outcome of the question.

2.1 METHODS OF PROMOTION

- 2.1.1 Local Members were informed of the scheme in advance of the sessions to give them time to answer any questions that residents may have. Local Members were advised by officers to post the scheme on the community hubs. Letters were sent by post to residents along Merlin Crescent which is the focus of the active travel route (approximately 100 houses), this letter can be seen in Appendix C. The scheme was also placed on BCBC social media platforms. All correspondence that was sent out was translated into Welsh.

2.2 HOW OFTEN DO YOU WALK OR CYCLE ON YOUR DAILY TRAVEL?

- 2.2.1 The first question of the survey is asking residents how often they use sustainable transport in their daily commute, whether this be visiting Bridgend town centre, neighbours or local services. This question has been included to get an understanding into how often people would choose not to drive and gather initial interests in an improvement to active travel infrastructure. The survey shows that there was a total of 138 participants, 29% who completed the survey at the in-person engagement session and 71% who completed one online.

Q1: HOW OFTEN DO YOU WALK OR CYCLE ON YOUR DAILY TRAVEL?									
	7 days a week	5-6 days a week	2-4 days a week	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Less often	Never	Total
IN-PERSON SURVEY	8	9	9	3	0	0	2	9	40
ONLINE	22	13	22	9	1	5	7	19	98
COMBINED	30	22	31	12	1	5	9	28	138

Table 1

- 2.2.2 The outcome of the first question highlighted two extremes. 28 of the 138 participants stated that they never walk or cycle in their daily travel. Reasoning to this was given at the in-person

engagement session where some would explain it was down to uncontrollable factors such as the gradient of the hill or health issues.

2.2.3 The other end of the chart highlights that people are using sustainable modes of transport in their daily commute. 83 of the 138 participants will walk or cycle 2-7 days a week, some explained this was on their commute to work and others highlighted they do it for fitness and leisure e.g. dog walks. These results have been evidenced below in Figure 2.

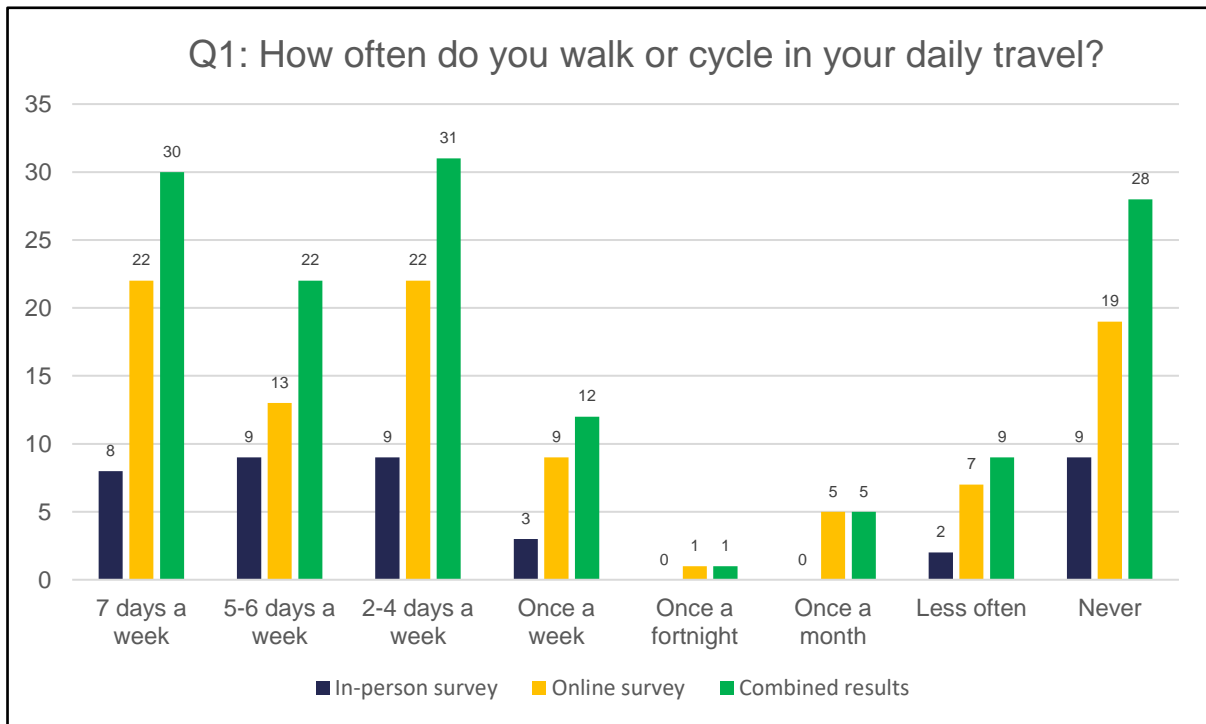


Figure 2

2.2.4 Figure 3 will help show the combined results and overall outcome to the first question. 22% of people who completed a survey will walk or cycle in the area 7 days a week. 20% of people wouldn't consider using sustainable modes of transport due to uncontrollable and controllable factors. Section 2.3 will help get a better understanding into why some participants may not consider walking or cycling along Merlin Crescent.

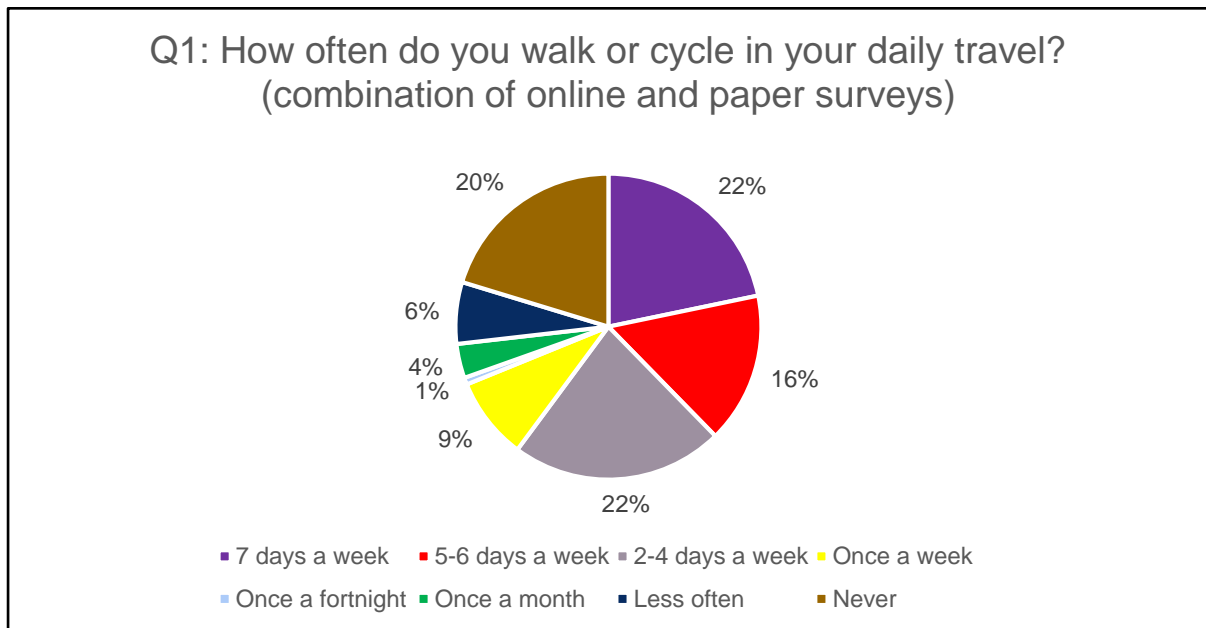


Figure 3

2.3 WHAT CURRENT DIFFICULTIES ARE THERE WITH WALKING OR CYCLING IN YOUR AREA? (PLEASE TICK THOSE THAT APPLY)

2.3.1 The second question was to gauge a further understanding as to why people may not consider active travel as their preferred mode of transport and delve into those initial conversations held in Question 1. Many residents selected more than one option as advised for this question, where they believe there are many difficulties with walking or cycling along Merlin Crescent.

Q2: WHAT CURRENT DIFFICULTIES ARE THERE WITH WALKING OR CYCLING IN YOUR AREA? (PLEASE TICK THOSE THAT APPLY)						
	Health reasons	Convenience	Safe crossings	Lack of active travel facilities	Time consuming	Other
PAPER SURVEY	11	3	8	5	6	13
ONLINE SURVEY	13	12	28	12	18	39
COMBINED RESULTS	24	15	36	17	24	52

Table 2

2.3.2 Table 2 is evidence that a big concern for many residents in the Bryntirion area is the lack of safe crossings especially during school opening/closing hours. 36 of the 138 participants (22%) wanted to see an improvement in the safety of getting across the road with vehicles travelling above the speed limit. The standout outcome in question 2 is that 52 participants (31%) wanted to raise 'Other' difficulties with officers, it is worth noting that some did not select the options provided but wrote them in the 'additional comments' box e.g. "it is not safe to cross".

2.3.3 Many of the surveys had comments on the speed/volume of traffic becoming a danger to everyone who is walking/cycling, especially during school opening and closing times. Online additional comments were made to highlight the gradient of the hill, stating that it is too steep for cycling and therefore an improvement of active travel facilities wouldn't encourage them to walk/cycle more. The charts below help bring to light the findings from this question. Most of the comments that were left in these boxes have been addressed in the petition later on in the report by an engineer (Table 8).

2.3.4 It is worth noting that 14% of participants explained that they do not use sustainable modes of transport due to health reasons which is an uncontrollable factor, some of these explained that they would still like to see an improvement to facilities for the safety of others such as the pupils. These trends can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 below.

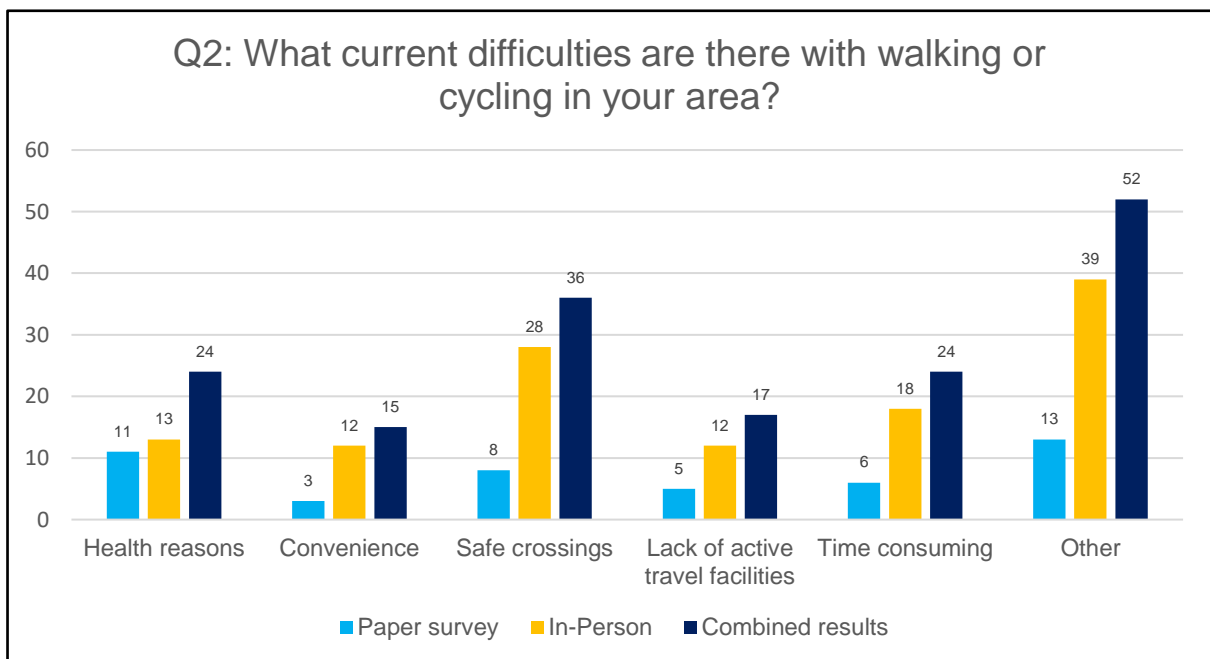


Figure 4

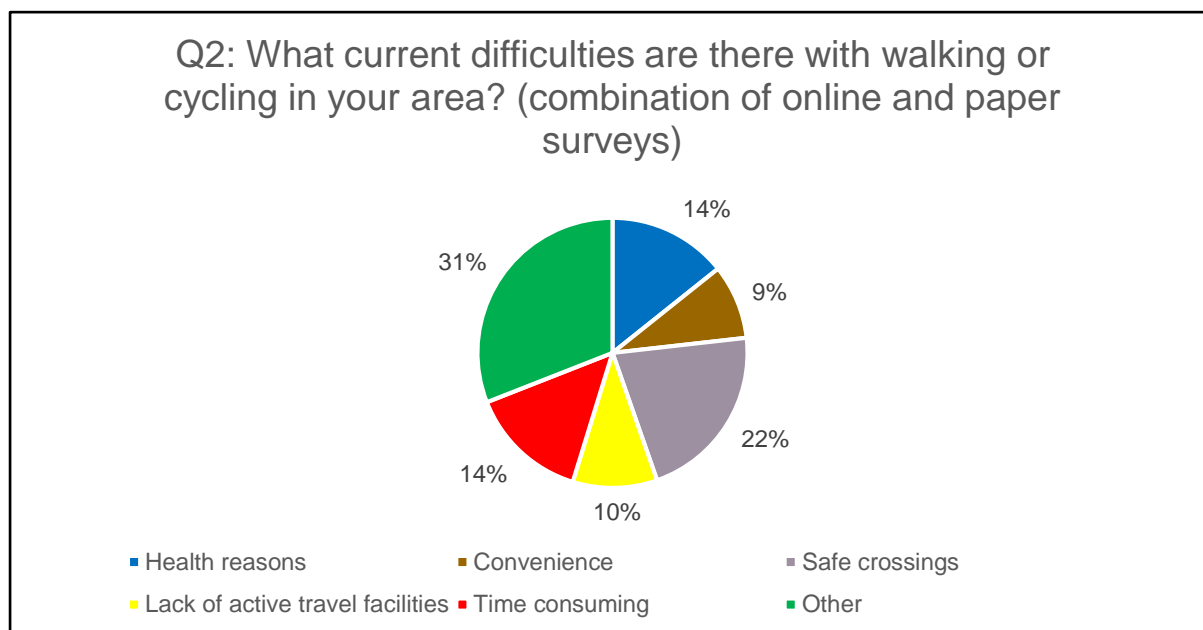


Figure 5

2.4 WILL THIS SCHEME ENCOURAGE YOU TO WALK OR CYCLE MORE THAN YOU CURRENTLY DO?

2.4.1 The purpose of the scheme is to create a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians to travel to Bridgend town centre, surrounding services and schools. Officers decided to get an understanding as to if the development of active travel facilities in the area would reduce the number of users choosing to travel by single car occupancy.

Q3: WILL THIS SCHEME ENCOURAGE YOU TO WALK OR CYCLE MORE THAN YOU CURRENTLY DO?		
	Yes	No
PAPER SURVEY	7	33
ONLINE SURVEY	14	84
COMBINED RESULTS	21	117

Table 3

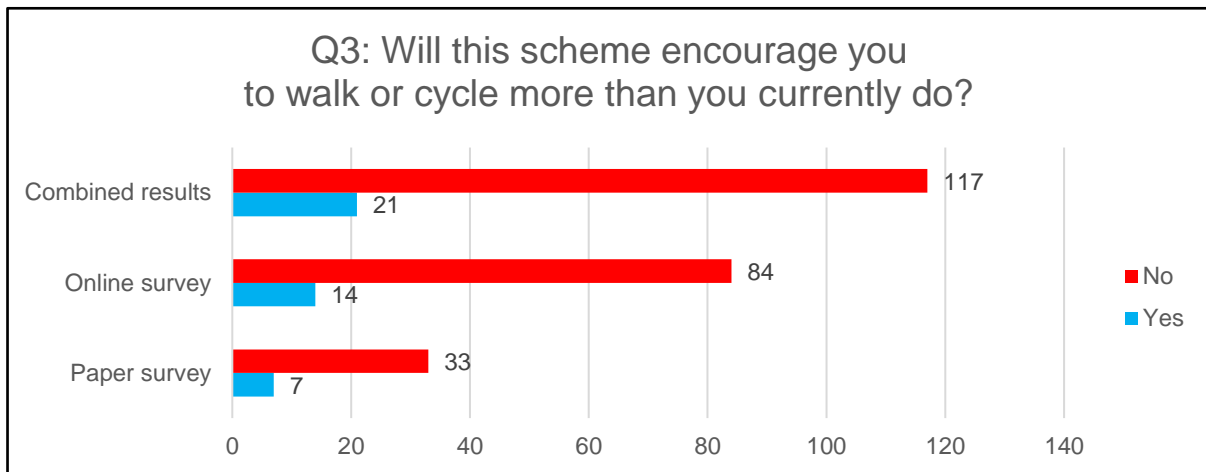


Figure 6

2.4.2 85% of participants stated that an improvement to the active travel facilities will not encourage them to walk or cycle more than they currently do, this could be down to the uncontrollable factors stated in question 2. Some residents at the in-person engagement session stated that the current conditions of the footway do not need improving. On the opposite side, 15% of participants who took part in the survey stated that an improvement will encourage them to consider sustainable methods of travel on their daily travel.

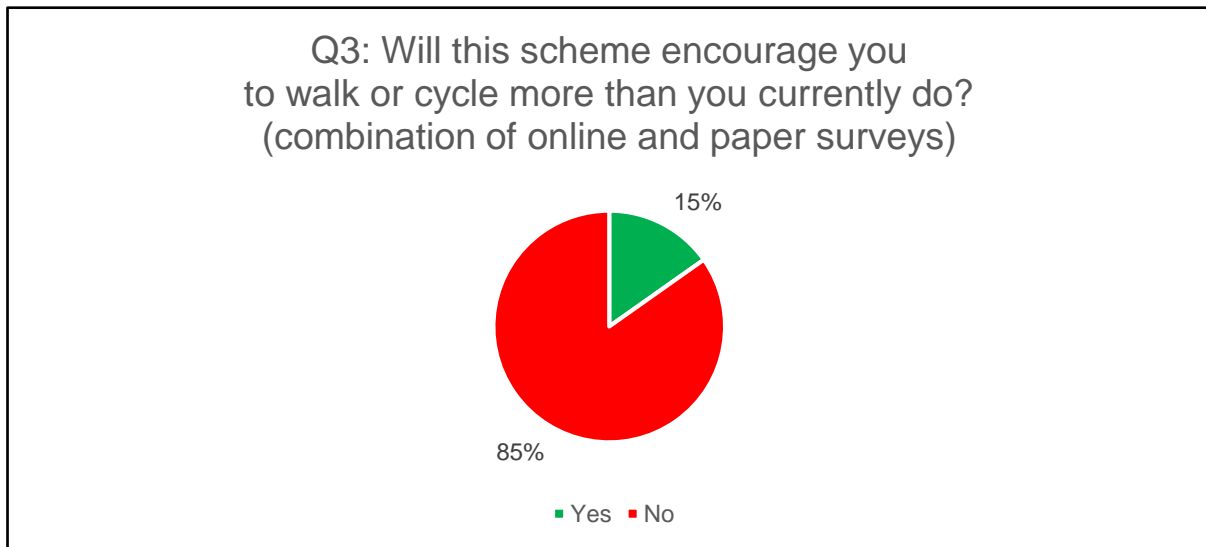


Figure 7

2.5 DO YOU SUPPORT THE SCHEME?

2.5.1 The last question of the survey is to get an overall understanding of how many people are in support of the scheme. Both questions 3 and 4 highlighted that a majority of the survey's participants were not in support of the proposals.

Q4: DO YOU SUPPORT THE SCHEME?			
	Yes	No	UNDECIDED
PAPER SURVEY	8	29	2
ONLINE SURVEY	17	74	7
COMBINED RESULTS	25	103	9

Table 4

2.5.2 Figures 8 and 9 below give the overall outcome of the survey with many leaving comments on the reasons behind their choice. 75% of people who participated in the survey are not in favour of the scheme going ahead.

2.5.3 Residents are concerned about exiting their driveways with the speed of cyclists coming down the hill and they do not wish to be held accountable for accidents occurring. Questions have also been raised in the 'Additional comments box' around how many will use the cycle path after construction due to the steep gradient of the hill. Other concerns and reasons for voting 'No' on question 4 is the congestion of the site during and after construction works, stating accidents can arise when waiting for buses and parents parking during peak school hours. Residents along Merlin Crescent do not wish for the grass verges to be removed due to surface water runoff with supporting points raised around flooding at the bottom of the hill. Some additional comments were left to explain that parents of the school are going to ask their children to use the opposite side of the road, with major concerns of safety around traffic congestion. Many of these points that have been raised on the survey have been addressed in the Petition section later on in the report (Table 8).

2.5.4 18% of participants supported the scheme stating that they would use this route to cycle to work around the industrial estates, quoting that if the paths were linked up, they would walk miles every day. Another visitor of the in-person engagement session mentioned that parking restrictions are needed in the local area to create a modal shift. "We need traffic calming along Bryngolau so it would be great to incorporate that too. Speed pads probably best. No one seems to know about the 20mph limit any more". The participants in support of the scheme wanted to see an improvement to the existing infrastructure to improve safety and encourage a healthy lifestyle for the pupils.

2.5.5 After looking at the proposals and speaking with officers, 7% of the survey's participants were left undecided on the scheme, it is unknown how they felt before seeing the proposals or coming to the session.

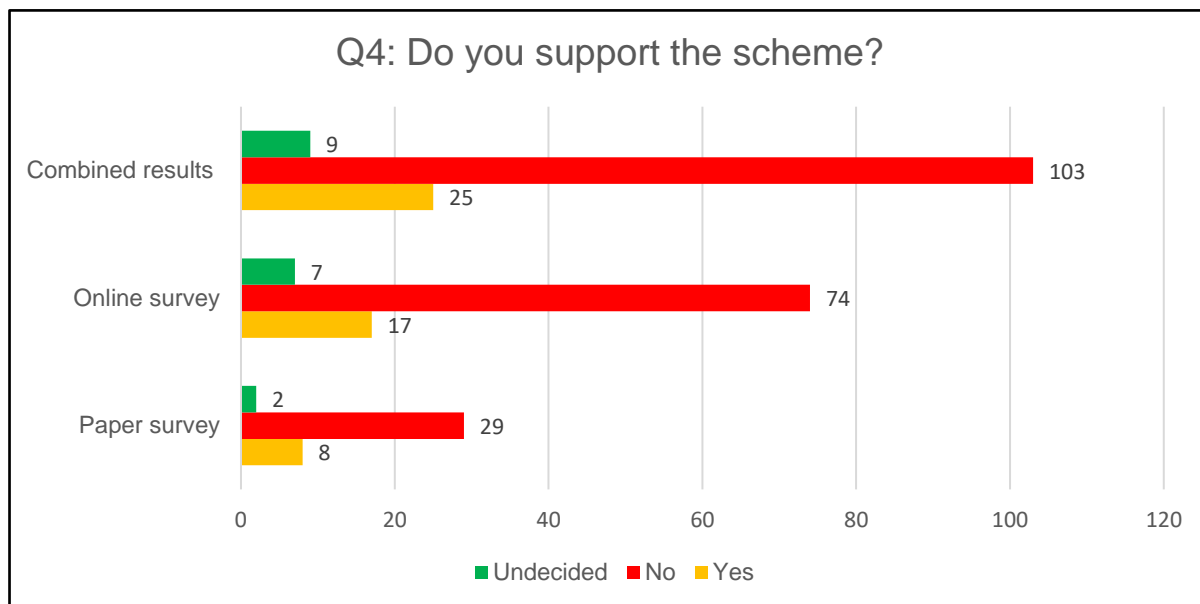


Figure 8

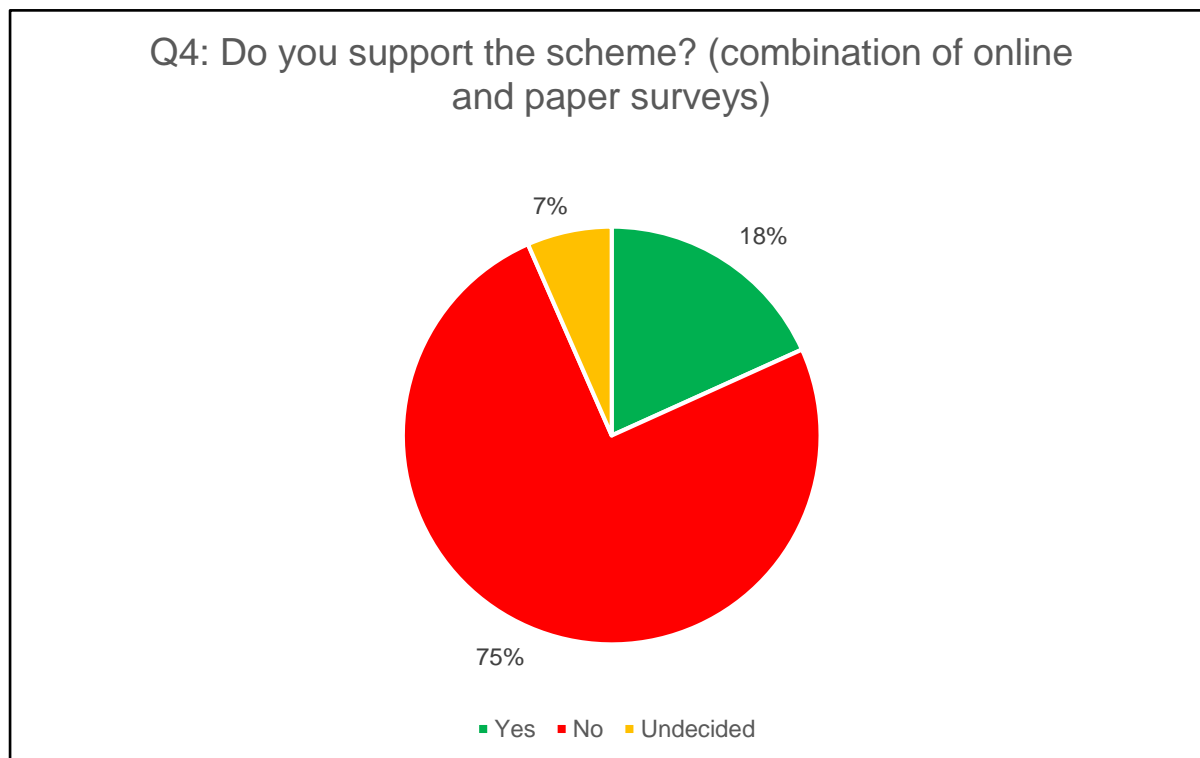


Figure 9

3.0 PUPIL ENGAGEMENT SESSION

- 3.0.1 The first session of 2024 was with representatives and pupils of Bryntirion Comprehensive School which took place for an hour at the end of a school day. This has been kept separate from the other data as different questions were asked and the session had a different format. The hour session was separated into two presentations, the first was a volunteer from Sustrans who wanted to get a general understanding for pupil's feelings towards active travel (please see Table 5). The second presentation was from a BCBC officer who went into scheme specifics to answer any questions that the pupils or staff may have (Section 3.3/Table 7).
- 3.0.2 Before leaving the presentation, pupils were kindly asked by the assistant head teacher to vote if they believe this scheme will improve their choices of transport to and from school. The results can be seen below in Table 6 which has been split into different age groups. A total of 15 voted no and 11 voted yes, which is a more closely matched percentage than the findings from the survey.

3.1 SUSTRANS SURVEY DATA

- 3.1.1 The information gathered from Sustrans is difficult to highlight any trends as it was done through a 'hands-up survey' approach. Towards the end of a session, it was difficult to get exact numbers with duplication. The statistics of how pupils would consider travelling before and after the presentations have still been included below.

Mode	Before presentation	After presentation
Walking	10	7
Scooter	0	3
Cycle	0	3
Park and stride	1	0
Car	12	4
Bus	1	1

Table 5

3.2 DO YOU THINK THIS SCHEME WILL IMPROVE WALKING & CYCLING TO/FROM SCHOOL?

Year Group	Yes	No
Year 7	5	4
Year 8		5
Year 9	4	

Year 10	1	4
Year 11		
Year 12		
Year 13		2
Staff	1	

Table 6

3.3 QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE PUPILS

Question from pupil	Officer response
How will you get the residents on board with parking	Residents will work and therefore be away from the house during certain times, therefore they'll avoid the parking restriction times.
Have the houses opposite the school agreed to the scheme?	It is difficult to get everyone on board, but the priority is safety and it's about balance with the parking restrictions.
Is the hill too steep?	It is steep, but pupils are young and there is the option of an E-bike/walking. The more practise you have in doing this the better you will get e.g., the first time will be difficult and maybe the first few weeks, but you will get fitter each time.
Will the weather impact the number of cyclists using the route?	There is no getting around the weather, but it should not restrict our freedom especially those in a comprehensive school. We want youth to take advantage of our freedom and use the youthfulness to experience the outdoors.
How will the school facilitate the increased number of bicycles?	Right now, there are lots of spaces in the school and if there is demand for it, expansion can take place.
Pupils can feel unsafe cycling	This can be down to an incident they have had on a bicycle previously, but the only way to gain confidence in it again is practise. We are looking to reduce the risk of accidents with cars and create a safe space for active travel. The aim of the scheme is to increase the confidence that

	pupils have cycling to and from school and discouraging single car occupancy.
When will this be put into practise?	Right now, we're checking what pupils' thoughts are on the scheme. There is then going to be a community engagement session on the 15th of July 2024, after we have gauged people's thoughts on the scheme, it will be considered when deciding what to do next.
Whilst it is being built, how will we access the school?	The two zebra crossings will be built first to separate people from construction. Construction will also take place in parts and the route will not all be developed at once.
What about parking and driveways on the hill?	Cars must be careful when using hills and driveways just as they must be now, officers then educated pupils on the highway code.
What happens if people park on the street after the work is done?	The area outside the school will be the only place where you cannot park, it will slow speeds to help make the school a safer place to enter/exit.
What about parking for houses opposite the school?	The zig zags will have designated times where you can and cannot park opposite the school.
Narrowing the road at the top of the hill may cause issues accessing the street	We are trying to encourage parents to not use cars to drop off, hopefully parents will realise this. Narrowing the street will help with safety through reduced speeds.
What about the bollards?	They are there to stop people parking on top of the cycle track and will not block driveways.
Some people may not want to move their cars	Every household along phase 1 has a driveway that can fit a minimum of 1 car.

Table 7

4.0 PETITION

4.0.1 A signature petition against the scheme is equally as important to mention in this report. The petition is from the residents of Merlin Crescent and Bright Hill who would like it submitted against the proposed active cycle path stages 1,2 & 3 from Bryntirion Comprehensive School to Broadlands. The issues that they have raised can be seen in Table 8 below supported by the response from officers.

Comment	BCBC Response
Safety to residents entering and leaving driveways.	Drivers need to take care when accessing/exiting driveways and wait until it is clear before proceeding as per the Highway Code.
Residents held accountable for accidents.	Welsh Government (WG) transport hierarchy places greater responsibility on those with the potential to cause the most harm.
Standing on cycle path while catching buses.	Bus stop bypass provided with pedestrian priority. Similar arrangement is already in use on Cowbridge Road and throughout South Wales.
Digging up pavement with shallow gas and electric services in pathways.	Utility supervision to be used as required. Contractor to provide appropriate risk assessments and method statements.
Length of time construction would take.	Traffic sensitive route due to the school. Safety is the priority therefore construction will be subject to reduced working hours and will take longer.
House kerb appeal removed, and house values reduced.	Not necessarily. This is a subjective opinion.
Excessive speed of cyclists.	All highway users should travel with due care and attention. Cycle lane has been segregated from the pedestrian footway.

9-degree Gradient of existing pathway is over the permitted 5 degree stipulated by the Welsh government active travel guidance.	Impossible to adjust the gradient. There are no viable alternatives for this route.
Removal of grass verges causing issues with runoff water causing flooding at the bottom of the hill. (Sustainable Drainage Systems SUDS).	Highway drainage to collect surface water. Additional gullies will be provided.
Danger to pedestrians being hit by speeding cyclist.	All highway users should travel with due care and attention. Cycle lane has been segregated from the pedestrian footway.
Narrowing the width of the road will cause congestion.	Narrowing the carriageway will help reduce vehicular speed.
Residents, visitors, and home maintenance vehicles unable to park outside their houses.	Use driveways or park on the carriageway.
Reduced road width, Buses unable to run along merlin crescent at peak school times.	Drivers should take care when parking not to obstruct driveways or the carriageway.
Parents picking up children will be parking on it as they do on grass verges now.	Bollards proposed to prevent this. Drivers should take care when parking not to obstruct driveways or the carriageway.
Cycle track being used by illegal electric scooters and bikes.	Electric bikes are not illegal. Use of illegal vehicles is an enforcement issue.
Residents unable to place recycle bags / boxes outside their houses with fear of accidents happening to walkers and cyclists.	No different to many other locations throughout Bridgend CBC. Residents will still be able to place their recycling at the kerb edge for collection.
No consideration given to the elderly, disabled or dog walkers who live in the street and surrounding area.	The elderly, disabled people and dog walkers will be able to use the newly resurfaced footway. Cycle lanes are suitable for use by mobility scooters.
Two-way cycle path to close to the many school children that are walking too and leaving school on mass".	School children will be able to use the route should they wish to cycle to and from school.

	The school would be asked to remind pupils to use the footway when walking rather than the cycle track.
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 8

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.0.1 The same survey that was handed to residents at the in-person engagement session was also released online, there is the possibility that duplication has occurred, where some participants have completed both. The community are passionate about this topic from both sides and therefore want to be heard by the BCBC.
- 5.0.2 Question 1 has highlighted that the current footpath is in use through different modes of transport. There are certain difficulties with active travel that stand out, but a range of reasons were given as to why people favour single car occupancy on their daily travels. 85% of participants selected that an improvement to infrastructure would not encourage them to walk or cycle more and 75% of people in total have voted out of favour for the scheme to go ahead. 18% were in support of the proposals and 7% came away undecided.

5.1 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- 5.1.1 The scheme is set to go to cabinet where all accounts will be discussed, and a decision will be made. The engagement sessions discussed in this report will also be taken into account with the signature petition when coming to a decision.

6.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COPY OF THE MERLIN CRESCENT SURVEY



15/07/2024

How often do you walk or cycle in your daily travel?

Frequency	Please Tick
7 days a week	
5-6 days a week	
2-4 days a week	
Once a week	
Once a fortnight	
Once a month	
Less often	
Never	

What current difficulties are there with walking or cycling in your area? (Please tick those that apply)

Health reasons	
Convenience	
Safe crossings	
Lack of active travel facilities	
Time consuming	
Other (please specify)	

APPENDIX C: SCREENSHOT OF THE LETTER SENT TO RESIDENTS



Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line:
Gofynnwch am / Ask for:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dyddiad / Date: 26/06/2024

Dear residents,

**Resident engagement and information drop-in
Merlin Crescent Active Travel Route**

We are writing to you in relation to the proposed segregated foot/cycle path along Merlin Crescent and selected dropped kerbs in Bryntirion.

This will be an engagement session where officers will be present to highlight drawings and plans to members of the community. Local councillors and community councillors have also been invited.

Drop in to Bryntirion Comprehensive School, Merlin Crescent, CF31 4QR anytime between 16:30 and 19:00 on the 15th of July 2024.

Please let us know as soon as possible whether you have a Welsh language preference so that we can have sufficient time to organise translation services.

Yours sincerely,

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Agenda Item 6

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR & CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	PAUL MILES GROUP MANAGER HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules as a result of this report.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the revised Flexible Working Policy.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the revised Flexible Working Policy, attached as **Appendix 1**.

2. Background

- 2.1 It is important that HR policies and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure they reflect current employment legislation, best practice and support the HR Business Partner model.
- 2.2 The process for undertaking these reviews includes feedback from managers within each directorate and HR Business Partners and consultation with Trade Union representatives.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 In addition to updating the policy in terms of a consistent presentation and style, following changes to legislation, the main changes to the policy are:
- An increase in the number of requests that can be made within 12 months.
 - Eligibility is now from day one.

- No expectation for employee to explain impact of request on team and workload.
- Decisions to be made within 2 months

3.2 The application form has been updated to reflect the changes included at 3.1.

3.3 Trade Union representatives were consulted in relation to the review and have had sight of the updated policy. The Trade Union representatives confirmed their agreement to proceed with implementing the reviewed policy.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report and are not relevant at this time.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the revised Flexible Working Policy.

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

SCOPE

This policy will apply to all employees of Bridgend County Borough Council except:

- **Those employed by Governing Bodies in educational establishments under delegated powers.**
- **Agency workers.**

<Date>

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Document Title	Flexible Working Policy
Previous Publication Date	October 2015
DOCUMENT APPROVAL	
This document received approval from:	Date
Group Manager HR & OD	
Trade Unions	June 2024
Corporate Management Board	
Cabinet/Council	n/a
REVISION HISTORY	
Revision History	This policy provides an opportunity for all employees to request a change to their working arrangements. It set out the legislative rights of employees and how request should be dealt with.
June 2024	The revised policy reflects changes in legislation which includes an increase in the number of requests that can be made within 12 months, eligibility is now from day one, decision to be made within 2 months. An updated application form.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council recognises that all employees have the right to request a variation to their contract of employment so that they can work more flexibly and thereby achieve a better balance between their work commitments and home life which supports their health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 It will be the Council's policy to consider all flexible working requests and where possible find a solution that suits both the employee and service provision.
- 1.3 The information in this policy reflects the national schemes of conditions of employment and the law as amended by the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Children and Families Act 2014, Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and statutory regulations in respect of Flexible Working.

2. General Principles

- 2.1. The Council's procedures and practice on considering applications for flexible working will take regard of the following general principles.
 - An eligible employee can apply to work flexibly for any reason on day one of employment.
 - Employees are able to make two flexible working requests every 12 months. All requests will be determined on their merit at the time the request is made.
 - Requests to work flexibly will only be refused where there is a clear business reason.
 - Where more than one request to work flexibly is received from employees in the same team, the service will need to look closely at the impact the requests would have on service provision. This may mean that decisions are made in the order the requests are received.

3 Making an application

- 3.1 An application must be dated and made in writing, using the attached 'Flexible Working Application Form', to the relevant line manager.
- 3.2. Eligible employees will be able to request a change in the hours they work, a change to the times when they are required to work, a change to the days they work and to the place of work. This could include such working patterns as annualised hours, compressed hours, flexitime, term-time working, self-rostering, shift working, staggered hours and hybrid working.
- 3.3. The onus will be on the employee to make a considered application explaining:
 - That the application is made under the statutory right to request a flexible working pattern.
 - The flexible working pattern applied for and proposed commencement date, giving the Council reasonable time to consider the proposal and implement it.
 - Whether a previous application has been made and, if so, when it was made.

- 3.4. Where applicable, the employee should also state if they are making their request in relation to any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. e.g. as a reasonable adjustment to a disability.
- 3.5. An accepted application will mean a permanent change to the employee's own terms and conditions of employment and as such the employee will not be able to automatically revert to the original working pattern unless otherwise agreed. The employee must make it clear in their application and subsequent discussions with the manager if they only wish to request flexible working for a defined period of time.

4 Considering the application

- 4.1 Upon receipt of an application to work flexibly, the relevant line manager will alert the Head of Service and if necessary, seek advice from the HR Business Partner. The line manager will be asked for detailed observations on the application and the reasonableness of the proposed working pattern.
- 4.2 All applications will be considered carefully and any benefits of the requested working arrangements for the employee and service will be weighed against any adverse business impact of implementing the change. Under no circumstances will individuals be discriminated against during the consideration of the application.
- 4.3 If the manager agrees to the details of the application, and the form is approved by the Head of Service, the employee will be informed in writing of the new working pattern. The letter will be issued by HR Lifecycle team.

If the manager is not in agreement with the details of the application, a meeting will be arranged, within 28 days of receipt of the application, with the employee, the line manager and if necessary, the HR Business Partner to explore the desired work pattern in depth and discuss how best it might be accommodated or consider other alternatives. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

- 4.4 An application may only be refused on one or more of the following grounds:

- the burden of additional costs
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- insufficient work available for the periods the employee proposes to work
- planned structural changes to the employer's business

- 4.5 If agreeable between manager and employee, a trial period could be used to explore whether a flexible working arrangement is suitable. This trial period should be no longer than 12 months and does not entitle the employee to any automatic right to continue with the arrangement following the trial period. The HR Lifecycle team will write to the employee to confirm the arrangements.

Prior to the end of the trial period, the manager will need to arrange a further meeting to consider whether the arrangement becomes permanent, or the employee reverts to their original working hours. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

4.6 Within 7 calendar days of the date of the meeting the HR Lifecycle team will write to the employee, to either:

- confirm a new work pattern and a start date or
- confirm a compromise work pattern agreed at the meeting or
- Provide clear business grounds as to why the application cannot be agreed, the reasons why they apply in the circumstances and to set out the appeal procedure.

5 Right of appeal

5.1 The employee has the right of appeal where a request is not accepted. The employee has 7 calendar days in which to exercise their right of appeal from the date of the written notification.

5.2 The appeal must be made in writing, stating the grounds for the appeal.

5.3 Within 14 days of receipt of an appeal the Director, or nominated officer, and HR Business Partner will meet with the employee to consider the appeal.

5.4 The Director, or nominated officer, will inform the employee in writing of the decision within 7 calendar days of the appeal meeting and, if the appeal is refused, give sufficient reason as to why. There will be no further internal right of appeal.

6. Right to be accompanied

6.1. The employee will have the right to be accompanied at the original meeting and at the appeal by a work colleague or trade union representative if they so wish.

6.2. The employee and/ or representative will have the right to address the meeting, which will be conducted as informally as possible, and to ask questions of the line manager as appropriate.

7. Time limits

7.1. The statutory regulations on flexible working stipulate that a flexible working request must be decided on within two months of receipt of request. However, where there is good reason to extend the above time limits, e.g. to explore an alternative working pattern, this may be done with the employee's agreement and confirmed in writing.

7.2. Time limits will automatically be extended where the person who would ordinarily consider the application is absent, e.g. because of annual leave or sick leave, when the application is received. In instances of extended absence every effort will be made to ensure that any extension of time scales is not prolonged and unreasonable.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Line Managers will:

- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner
- Ensure understanding of the policy and employee rights.
- Signpost to relevant health and wellbeing resources where needed.

8.2 Employees will:

- Comply with this policy in a reasonable, constructive, and appropriate manner
- Maintain regular contact with managers so that they can provide appropriate advice and support when needed.

8.3 HR Business Partners will:

- Provide support and advice to managers on the application of this policy
- Review the policy
- Identify any learning and development needs as a result of the application of this policy.
- Signpost to relevant health and wellbeing resources where needed.

8.4 Trade Union Representatives will:

- Provide advice and support to employees as required.
- Contribute to the review of the policy.

9. Monitor and Review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the policy review timetable or sooner if there is a need, or due to any legislative changes.

FLEXIBLE WORKING APPLICATION FORM

Application made under the statutory right to request a flexible working pattern

1. Personal Details

Name:

Employee No:

Department:

Job Title:

2. Eligibility - I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern. I confirm I meet the eligibility criteria as follows:

I have not made two requests to work flexibly under this right during the last 12 months whilst working in this current post

*Yes/No

* Delete as appropriate

3. Please describe your current working pattern (days/ hours/ times worked):

4. Please describe the flexible working arrangement you are requesting.

Note: You can request a change in the hours you work, a change to the times you are required to work and to your place of work. An accepted application will mean a permanent change to your working arrangements/ terms and conditions of employment, unless otherwise agreed for a trial period up to a maximum of 12 months. **Please state if this request is being made in relation to any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010.**

(You may continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

I would like this working pattern to commence from:

Date:

Note: Please allow up to 2 months to consider your request before it can be implemented and possibly longer where difficulties arise.

Signed: (Employee)

Date:

Signed: (Head of Service)

Date:

Please give this application to your Head of Service for approval.

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Agenda Item 7

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MICHAEL PITMAN – TECHNICAL SUPPORT OFFICER DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To update Cabinet with a report for Members noting on the Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023/24.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the Information Reports for noting that have been published since its last scheduled meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 At a previous meeting of Council, it was resolved to approve a revised procedure for the presentation to Council of Information Reports for noting.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Information Reports

The following Information Reports have been published since the last meeting of Council:-

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	10 December 2024
Omubudsman Annual Letter 2023-2024	10 December 2024

3.2 Availability of Document

The documents have been circulated to Elected Members electronically via

email and placed on the Bridgend County Borough Council website. The documents are available from the above date of publication.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That Cabinet acknowledges the publication of the reports referred to in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

Background documents

None

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	To provide details of the current policy under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the use of RIPA within the Authority.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide details of the current policy under the Regulation and Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

2. Background

- 2.1 RIPA provides a framework for certain public bodies, including local authorities, to use covert surveillance to gather information about individuals without their knowledge for the purposes of undertaking statutory functions in connection with the prevention and detection of crime.

- 2.2 For local authorities, the only ground for authorisation is for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime which:

- (a) constitutes one or more criminal offences, or
- (b) is, or corresponds to, any conduct which, if it all took place in England and Wales, would constitute one or more criminal offences.

And the criminal offence or one of the criminal offences is or would be-

- (a) an offence which is punishable, whether on summary conviction or on indictment, by a maximum term of at least 6 months of imprisonment, or
- (b) an offence under:
 - section 146 of the Licensing Act 2003 (sale of alcohol to children);
 - section 147 of the Licensing Act 2003 (allowing the sale of alcohol to children);

- section 147A of the Licensing Act 2003 (persistently selling alcohol to children);
- section 7 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (sale of tobacco, etc, to persons under eighteen).

2.3 RIPA activity and authorisations are governed by Codes of Practice and Guidance issued by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) and the Home Office.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Members are required to review the use of RIPA and set the policy at least once a year. Elected Members cannot be involved in decisions on specific authorisations, but have oversight of the process.

3.2 The Council has always been very sparing in its use of RIPA. It is only used in cases where it is important to obtain information to support potential criminal proceedings, and only where that information cannot be obtained by any other means. There have been no authorisations for RIPA since April 2014. It is clear that the general policy is that it should not be used unless absolutely necessary.

3.3 Other reasons likely to account for the reduction in the number of authorisations being sought are:

- a reduction in the number of incidents requiring investigation, and
- increased awareness of the scope of RIPA and the alternatives to covert surveillance as a result of training delivered to all Investigating and Authorising officers.

3.4 Overall responsibility for the use of RIPA lies with the Monitoring Officer who acts as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). The policy attached as **Appendix 1** has been reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose and in accordance with the Codes of Practice issued by the Home Office.

3.5 Local authorities are subject to regular inspections every three years from the IPCO, the most recent Council inspection having taken place successfully in October 2020. The SRO has been notified that the IPCO remain satisfied that our ongoing compliance with RIPA will be maintained and as such, the Council's next inspection will be in 2026. The IPCO requested that the Council ensure that the key compliance issues continue to receive the necessary internal governance and oversight through the SRO, annually update Elected Members, policy refreshes and ongoing training and awareness raising.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report and therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this

report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. As the report is for information only it is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the report.

Background documents:

None

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Bridgend County Borough Council

Policy on Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources under the
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

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- 1 Identification of Senior Responsible Officer and Designated Authorised Officers
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- 3 Home Office Local Authority Procedure Flow Chart: Application to a Justice of the Peace seeking an Order to approve the grant of a RIPA Authorisation or Notice.

Introduction to RIPA 2000

- 1.1 In carrying out its duties the Council may need to conduct appropriate investigations into allegations or concerns brought to its attention and such investigations may necessarily require covert surveillance. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) provides a regulatory framework governing interception of communications, surveillance and associated activities. This is to ensure the powers are used lawfully and in a way that is compatible with Human Rights. Through the application of authorisation procedures and Magistrates Court approval it ensures that a balance is maintained between the public interest and the human rights of individuals.
- 1.2 This Policy is based upon the requirements of RIPA and Home Office's Code of Practices on Covert Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources. Copies of the Home Office's Codes of Practice are available on their website. Forms to record applications and decisions in writing are also available on the website.
- 1.3 The Council takes its statutory responsibilities seriously and will at all times ensure that any such surveillance or use of an intelligence source carried out is authorised and in accordance with the legislation. Investigations which are not authorised could leave the Council open to challenge by individuals who consider that there has been an intrusion into their privacy.
- 1.4 It is considered good practice for public authorities to appoint a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) to be made responsible for the integrity of the process in place for the management of surveillance. The current SRO for the Council is identified in **Appendix 1**. Whilst legislation does not preclude the SRO's use as an Authorising Officer, it is unlikely that they would be regarded as objective if they oversee their own authorisations.

Types of Surveillance

- 2.1 Surveillance can be overt or covert. Overt surveillance does not require authorisation under RIPA and covers all situations where surveillance is not covert. The use of such surveillance is to be commended where the required result can be achieved by this means.
- 2.2 Covert surveillance is carried out in a manner calculated to ensure that the person subject to the surveillance is unaware that it is or may be taking place.
- 2.3 There are three types of covert surveillance:

'Intrusive Surveillance' - the Council has no statutory power to grant authorisations for intrusive surveillance but it is included here to alert officers to be aware of inadvertently breaching this rule.

Intrusive surveillance is covert and carried out in relation to anything taking place on any residential premises or any private vehicle. Anything that occurs on residential premises or any private vehicle and involves the presence of someone on the

premises or in the vehicle or is carried out by means of a surveillance device will be intrusive. If the device is not on the premises or in the vehicle, it is only intrusive if it consistently produces information of the same quality as if it were.

Residential Premises includes any premises as is for the time being occupied or used by any person, however, temporary, for residential purposes or otherwise as living accommodation. It will not include communal areas, front gardens or driveways visible to the public.

Private vehicles will be those used primarily for the private purpose of the person who owns it or a person otherwise having the right to use it.

'Directed Surveillance' – this is covert surveillance that is not intrusive and is undertaken for the purposes of a specific investigation in a way that is likely to produce private information about a person. It must be necessary and proportionate to what it seeks to achieve.

'Covert Human Intelligence Source' (CHIS) – this is the use or conduct of someone who establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of obtaining information. It must be necessary and proportionate to what it seeks to achieve.

Authorisation for Surveillance

- 3.1 As soon as a plan of action is decided upon which involves covert surveillance or the use of CHIS appropriate authorisation should be sought in advance.
- 3.2 All RIPA authorisations will require Magistrates Court approval in the form of an Order to take effect. The Home Office guidance on the judicial approval process for RIPA is available on the Home Office website.
- 3.3 The procedure outlined in the flowchart at **Appendix 2** should be followed by Officers to ensure formal quality assurance.
- 3.4 All applications for authorisation of directed surveillance must be in writing and stipulate:
 - how the surveillance will be conducted;
 - the grounds on which authorisation is sought. Authorisations cannot be granted unless specific criteria are satisfied. **For the Council, the only ground for authorisation is for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime which -**
 - (a) constitutes one or more criminal offences, or
 - (b) is, or corresponds to, any conduct which, if it all took place in England and Wales, would constitute one or more criminal offences.

And the criminal offence or one of the criminal offences is or would be-

- (a) an offence which is punishable, whether on summary conviction or on indictment, by a maximum term of at least 6 months of imprisonment, or
- (b) an offence under:
 - section 146 of the Licensing Act 2003 (sale of alcohol to children);
 - section 147 of the Licensing Act 2003 (allowing the sale of alcohol to children);

- section 147A of the Licensing Act 2003 (persistently selling alcohol to children);
- section 7 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (sale of tobacco, etc, to persons under eighteen)
- a full account of the investigation or operation (including full details of where the surveillance is to take place);
- likelihood of acquiring any confidential material as a consequence of the surveillance;
- the details of any potential collateral intrusion and an assessment of the risk of such intrusion or interference. There is an obligation on officers to ensure that collateral intrusion is minimised and is not excessive in the circumstances
- the reasons why the directed surveillance is considered to be proportionate to what it seeks to achieve (including the relevant circumstances);
- the identities, where known, of those to be the subject of directed surveillance;
- an explanation of the information which it is desired to obtain as a result of the authorisation;
- where the authorisation is sought urgently, reasons why the case is considered to be urgent;
- a subsequent record of whether authority was granted or refused, by whom and the time and date.

3.5 Applications to the Court for an approval of an authorisation must be made in accordance with the requirements of the Court. Legal Services must be consulted on the application form to the Magistrates Court.

The applicant must:

- apply in writing and serve the application on the court officer;
- attach the authorisation or notice which the applicant wants the court to approve;
- attach such other material (if any) on which the applicant relies to satisfy the court of the statutory requirements;
- attach the proposed terms of the Order (Annex B court document);
- the forms and supporting documentation **MUST** make the case it is not enough for an officer to provide oral evidence not supported by the contents of the paper;
- provide the court (on request) with a signed Delegated Power authorising the appearance of the local authority in legal proceedings.

3.6 **Appendix 3** outlines the local authority procedure for seeking an order from the Magistrates Court.

3.7 The Officers within the Council entitled to grant authorisations are specified in legislation and are those whose posts appear in **Appendix 1**, however it is important that all those involved in undertaking surveillance are fully aware of the extent and limits of the authorisation in question.

3.8 Wherever knowledge of confidential information is likely to be acquired, a higher level of authorisation is needed. Confidential information consists of communications subject to legal privilege, communications between a Member of

Parliament and another person on constituency matters, confidential personal information, or confidential journalistic material. So, for example, extra care should be taken where, through the use of surveillance, if it is likely that knowledge will be acquired of communications between a minister of religion and an individual relating to the latter's spiritual welfare, or between a Member of Parliament and a constituent relating to constituency matters, or wherever matters of medical or journalistic confidentiality or legal privilege may be involved. Authorisation can only be provided by the Chief Executive or in his/her absence the Monitoring Officer.

- 3.9 Authorising Officers should not be responsible for authorising their own activities. Because of the number of officers designated as Authorising Officers within the Council, this situation should be avoidable.

Necessity and Proportionality

- 3.10 In signing the application an Authorising Officer must give personal consideration to the necessity and proportionality of the proposed surveillance prior to applying to the Magistrates for approval and must personally ensure that the surveillance is reviewed and cancelled.
- 3.11 Proportionality will involve balancing the seriousness of intrusion into the privacy of the subject of the operation (or any other person who may be affected) against the need for the activity in investigative and operational terms. The authorisation will not be proportionate if it is excessive in the overall circumstances of the case. Each action authorised should bring an expected benefit to the investigation or operation and should not be disproportionate or arbitrary. The fact that a suspected offence may be serious will not alone render intrusive actions proportionate. Similarly, an offence may be so minor that any deployment of covert techniques would be disproportionate.
- 3.12 No activity should be considered proportionate if the information which is sought could reasonably be obtained by other less intrusive means. The following elements of proportionality should be considered:
- balancing the size and scope of the proposed activity against the gravity and extent of the perceived crime or offence;
 - explaining how and why the methods to be adopted will cause the least possible intrusion on the subjects and others;
 - considering whether the activity is an appropriate use of the legislation and a reasonable way, having considered all reasonable alternatives, of obtaining the necessary result;
 - evidencing, as far as practicable, what other methods had been considered and why they were not implemented.
- 3.13 If the Authorising Officer is unsure on any matter they should seek advice from the SRO.
- 3.14 Urgent authorisations should not be necessary. An authorisation is not to be regarded as urgent where the need for an authorisation has been neglected or the urgency is of the Authorising Officer's or Applicant's own making. The Magistrates Court may consider an authorisation out of hours in **exceptional** circumstances. Please refer to **Appendix 3** for the procedure to be followed when an authorisation is urgent and cannot be handled the next working day.

3.15 Officers conducting covert surveillance will have a full briefing and be required to read the authorisation granted to ensure that their activity is based on what has been specifically authorised and not merely what has been requested.

Duration

3.16 An authorisation granted by an Authorising Officer will cease to have effect (unless renewed) at the end of a period of three months beginning with the day on which it took effect.

3.17 As soon as the decision is taken that directed surveillance should be discontinued, the instruction must be given to those involved to stop all surveillance. The date and time when such an instruction was given should be recorded.

Renewals

3.18 If at any time before an authorisation would cease to have effect, the Authorising Officer considers it necessary for the authorisation to continue for the purpose for which it was given, he may renew it in writing for a further period of three months. Applications for renewal should only be made shortly before the authorisation is due to expire and must be submitted to the Magistrates Court for approval before they can be effective.

3.19 Authorisations may be renewed more than once if necessary, provided they continue to meet the criteria for authorisation and are approved by the Magistrates Court.

3.20 All applications for the renewal of an authorisation should record:

- whether this is the first renewal or every occasion on which the authorisation has been renewed previously;
- any significant changes to the information as outlined in the original application;
- the reasons why it is necessary to continue with the surveillance;
- the content and value to the investigation or operation of the information so far obtained by the surveillance;
- the results of regular reviews of the investigation or operation.

3.21 In rare circumstances renewals may be granted orally in urgent cases but will still require the approval of the Magistrates Court.

Cancellations

3.22 The Authorising Officer who granted or last renewed the authorisation must cancel it if s/he is satisfied that the directed surveillance no longer meets the criteria upon which it was authorised. The cancellation should include how the surveillance assisted the investigation. When cancelling an authorisation, an Authorising Officer must ensure that proper arrangements have been made for the activity's discontinuance, including the removal of any technical equipment. Where the Authorising Officer is no longer available, this duty will fall on any one of the other Authorising Officers listed at **Appendix 1**.

Reviews

3.23 Reviews of authorisations should be undertaken on a monthly basis to assess the need for the surveillance to continue. The results of a review should be recorded.

Where the surveillance provides access to confidential information or involves collateral intrusion authorisations for such surveillance should be reviewed frequently.

- 3.24 If the Authorising Officer is in any doubt they should ask the SRO before any directed surveillance is authorised, renewed, cancelled or rejected.

Drive-bys

- 4.1 'Drive-by' surveillance may or may not need a RIPA authorisation and it is not acceptable to prescribe a minimum number of passes before an authorisation is required. Where an officer as part of an investigation, intends to drive by a property to establish the location of a property then an authorisation is unlikely to be required. However, if the drive-by is to assess for signs of occupation and a record is to be made or the drive-bys are repeated and/or systematic, then an authorisation may be required. Consideration should also be given to the likelihood of collateral intrusion.

CCTV

- 5.1 The use of overt CCTV cameras does not normally require an authorisation as members of the public will be aware that such systems are in use (e.g. visible signage). However, where overt CCTV cameras are used in a covert and pre-planned manner as part of a specific investigation or operation, an authorisation should be considered.
- 5.2 If a law enforcement agency (eg Police) wishes to use the Council's CCTV system for directed surveillance, a copy of the authorisation will be required (redacted if necessary to prevent the disclosure of sensitive information) and the equipment will only be used in accordance with the authorisation.

Internet and Social Networking Sites

- 6.1 Although social networking and internet sites are easily accessible, consideration must still be given about whether a RIPA authorisation should be obtained if they are going to be used during the course of an investigation. If the study of an individual's online presence becomes persistent, or where material obtained from any check is to be extracted and recorded and may engage privacy considerations, RIPA authorisations may need to be considered.
- 6.2 Care must be taken to understand how the social media site being used works. Officers must not be tempted to assume that one service provider is the same as another or that the services provided by a single provider are the same.
- 6.3 Depending on the nature of the online platform, there may be a reduced expectation of privacy where information relating to a person or group of people is made openly available within the public domain, however in some circumstances privacy implications still apply. This is because the intention when making such information available was not for it to be used for a covert purpose such as investigative activity. This is regardless of whether a user of a website or social media platform has sought to protect such information by restricting its access by activating privacy settings.
- 6.4 In order to determine whether a directed surveillance authorisation should be sought for accessing information on a website as part of a covert investigation or

operation, it is necessary to look at the intended purpose and scope of the online activity it is proposed to undertake. Factors that should be considered in establishing whether a directed surveillance authorisation is required include:

- Whether the investigation or research is directed towards an individual;
- Whether it is likely to result in obtaining private information about a person or group of people;
- Whether it is likely to involve visiting internet sites to build up a picture or profile;
- Whether the information obtained will be recorded and retained;
- Whether the information is likely to provide an observer with a pattern of lifestyle;
- Whether the information is being combined with other sources of information, which amounts to information relating to a person's private life;
- Whether the investigation or research is part of an ongoing piece of work involving repeated viewing of the subject(s);
- Whether it is likely to involve identifying and recording information about third parties, such as friends and family members of the subject of interest, or information posted by third parties, that may include private information and therefore constitute collateral intrusion into the privacy of these third parties.
- Conversely, where the Council has taken reasonable steps to inform the public or particular individuals that the surveillance is or may be taking place, the activity may be regarded as overt and a directed surveillance authorisation will not normally be available.

Example 1: *An officer undertakes a simple internet search on a name, address or telephone number to find out whether a subject of interest has an online presence. This is unlikely to need an authorisation. However, if having found an individual's social media profile or identity, it is decided to monitor it or extract information from it for retention in a record because it is relevant to an investigation or operation, authorisation should then be considered.*

Example 2: *The Council undertakes general monitoring of the internet in circumstances where it is not part of a specific, ongoing investigation or operation to identify themes, trends, possible indicators of criminality or other factors that may influence operational strategies or deployments. This activity does not require RIPA authorisation. However, when this activity leads to the discovery of previously unknown subjects of interest, once it is decided to monitor those individuals as part of an ongoing operation or investigation, authorisation should be considered.*

6.5 An authorisation for the use and conduct of a CHIS (see paragraph 7) may be needed if a relationship is established or maintained by the officer on behalf of the Council without disclosing his or her identity (i.e the activity will be more than mere reading of the site's content). This could occur if an officer covertly asks to become a 'friend' of someone on a social networking site.

- 6.6 It is not unlawful for an officer to set up a false identity but it is inadvisable to do so for a covert purpose without authorisation.
- 6.7 An officer should not adopt the identity of a person known, or likely to be known, to the subject of interests or users of the site without authorisation, and without the explicit consent of the person whose identity is used, and without considering the protection of that person.

Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS)

- 7.1 Under the 2000 Act, a person is a CHIS if:
- they establish or maintain a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the doing of anything falling within paragraph 26(8)(b) or (c) of the Act;
 - they covertly use such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to any information to another person; or
 - they covertly disclose information obtained by the use of such a relationship or as a consequence of the existence of such a relationship.
- 7.2 **Urgent advice from Legal should be sought should the use and conduct of a CHIS be considered. The Council is not required to seek or obtain an authorisation just because one is available. The use or conduct of a CHIS can be a particularly intrusive and high risk covert technique, requiring dedicated and sufficient resources, oversight and management.**
- 7.3 There is a separate Code of Practice for CHIS issued by the Home Office which officers should carefully study if a CHIS authorisation is sought. The same principles outlined above for directed surveillance apply to CHIS and should be followed including necessity and proportionality.
- 7.4 Officers should consider the security and welfare of the source and the foreseeable consequences to others in relation to what they are being asked to do. A risk assessment must be carried out before any authorisation is granted, at any renewal, review and cancellation.
- 7.5 Following authorisation and approval from the Magistrates Court, one officer is to be tasked with the day to day running of the CHIS, contact with them, giving them their tasks and keeping confidential records about what they achieve. A separate officer is to be appointed to oversee the use made of the CHIS.
- 7.6 An authorisation should not be granted for the use or conduct of a source unless believed that there are arrangements in place for ensuring there is at all times a person with the responsibility for maintaining a record of the authorisation and use made of source.
- 7.7 In deciding whether authorisation is required for a test purchase operation (for example in relation to sales of age restricted products), consideration should be given to:
- whether the activity is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about any person, and

- whether the test purchaser establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with the seller.

In circumstances where the exercise is considered to fall outside the scope of RIPA, the reasons for this decision should be recorded.

- 7.8 An authorisation granted in writing by an Authorising Officer and approved by a Magistrates Court for the conduct or use of a CHIS will cease to have effect (unless renewed) at the end of a period of 12 months beginning with day on which it took effect.
- 7.9 Subject to legal privileged information, material obtained from a CHIS may be used as evidence in criminal proceedings whether these proceedings are brought by the Council or by another public authority.
- 7.10 Where the product of the use or conduct of a CHIS could be relevant to pending or future criminal or civil proceedings, it should be retained in accordance with applicable disclosure requirements.
- 7.11 Subject to legal privileged information, there is nothing under the Act which prevents material obtained from authorisations for the use or conduct of a CHIS for a particular purpose from being used to further other purposes.
- 7.12 When cancelling an authorisation, an Authorising Officer must ensure that proper arrangements have been made for the activity's discontinuance including directions for the management of the product.
- 7.13 An officer who conducts activity on the internet in such a way that they may interact with others, whether by publicly open websites or more private exchanges, in circumstances where the other parties could not reasonably be expected to know their true identity, should consider whether the activity requires a CHIS authorisation. A directed surveillance authorisation should also be considered, unless the acquisition of that information is or will be covered by the terms of an applicable CHIS authorisation.

Collaborative Working

- 8.1 When granting or applying for an authorisation, the officer will need to be aware of particular sensitivities in the local community where the surveillance or property interference is taking place, and of any similar activities being undertaken by other public authorities which could impact on the deployment of surveillance. It is therefore recommended that where an Authorising Officer considers that conflicts might arise, they should consult a senior officer within the police force area in which the investigation or operation is to take place.
- 8.2 Where possible, the Council should seek to avoid duplication of authorisations as part of a single investigation or operation. The Council may therefore work in conjunction with other agencies to carry out surveillance. It will not be necessary for each party to complete its own form of authorisation and the Council can rely upon a duly authorised form completed by another agency providing that the Authorising Officer and Legal Services are made aware and it has been approved by the Magistrates Court if required. Duplication of authorisations does not affect

the lawfulness of the activities to be conducted, but may create an unnecessary administrative burden on the Council.

- 8.3 A copy of the relevant forms and Magistrates Court approval should be obtained and copies kept in the same manner as an authorisation granted by the Council.
- 8.4 If an officer has any concerns regarding an authorisation, review or renewal completed by another agency they should refer the matter to Legal Services at the earliest opportunity.

Record Management

- 9.1 Authorising Officers must send the original of any authorisation, any cancellation, renewal or review to the SRO within 2 working days of the issue.
- 9.2 The Council must keep records relating to all authorisations, Magistrates Court approvals, reviews, renewals, cancellations and refusals in accordance with the Home Office Code of Practice. A Central Register of all authorisations, Magistrates approvals, reviews, renewals, cancellations, refusals and records of oral authorisations will be monitored and maintained by the SRO with each Department keeping their own file of copies of their authorisations.
- 9.3 Records must be available for inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner and retained to allow the Investigatory Powers Tribunal to undertake its functions. Although records are only required to be retained for at least three years, it is therefore desirable, if possible, to retain records for up to five years. Such information will be reviewed at appropriate intervals to confirm that the justification for its retention is still valid and will be securely destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed for authorisation purposes.
- 9.4 There are separate and specific record keeping requirements where use is made of CHIS. Records should be maintained in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality of the source and the information provided by that source. There should at all times be a designated person in the Council with responsibility for maintaining a record of the use made of the source.
- 9.5 Documents created under the RIPA procedure are highly confidential and shall be treated as such. Authorising Officers, through the Data Protection Officer must ensure compliance with the appropriate data protection requirements under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's internal arrangements relating to the handling and storage of material. The procedures and safeguards outlined in the Home Office Code of Practice will also be applied in relation to the handling of any material obtained through directed surveillance. Any breaches of data protection requirements should be reported immediately to the Data Protection Officer.
- 9.6 The SRO will ensure that robust and adequate arrangements are in place for the secure handling, storage and destruction of material obtained through the use of surveillance. The Council's internal safeguards will be kept under periodic review to ensure that they remain up to date and effective. Where the material could be relevant to pending or future criminal proceedings, it should be retained in accordance with established disclosure requirements for a suitable period and subject to review.

General Considerations

- 10.1 The SRO will ensure that guidance and training on RIPA is provided to staff requiring it. A record of those receiving training will be kept by the SRO.
- 10.2 Complaints may be dealt with by means of the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure and/or by virtue of a complaint to the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT). The IPT has jurisdiction to investigate and determine complaints against the Council's use of investigatory powers, and is the only appropriate tribunal for human rights claims against the intelligence services. Following receipt of a complaint or claim from a person, the IPT can undertake its own enquiries and investigations and can demand access to all information held by the Council necessary to establish the facts of a claim and to reach a determination.
- 10.3 The body responsible for the oversight of RIPA is the Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC). The IPC are authorised to carry out inspections of the Council to review intelligence gathering procedures and administration processes.
- 10.4 This Policy is a public document and is operational forthwith, replacing any previous policies and procedures. It will be reviewed from time to time by the SRO and the Council's Cabinet shall set this Policy annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
- 10.5 Further advice on good practice is contained within the Home Office Codes of Practice as outlined at paragraph 1.2.

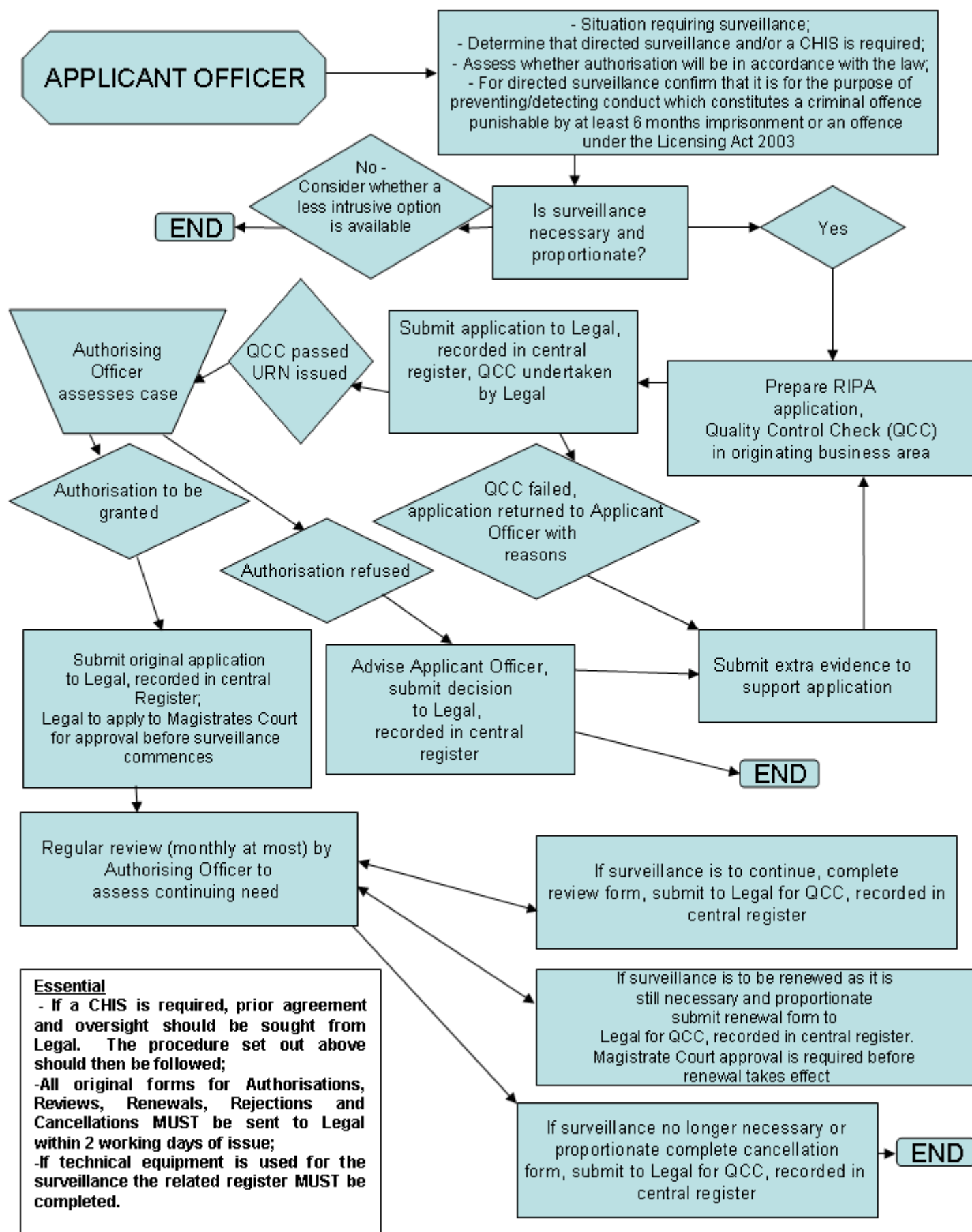
Senior Responsible Officer

The Monitoring Officer is authorised to act as the Senior Responsible Officer.

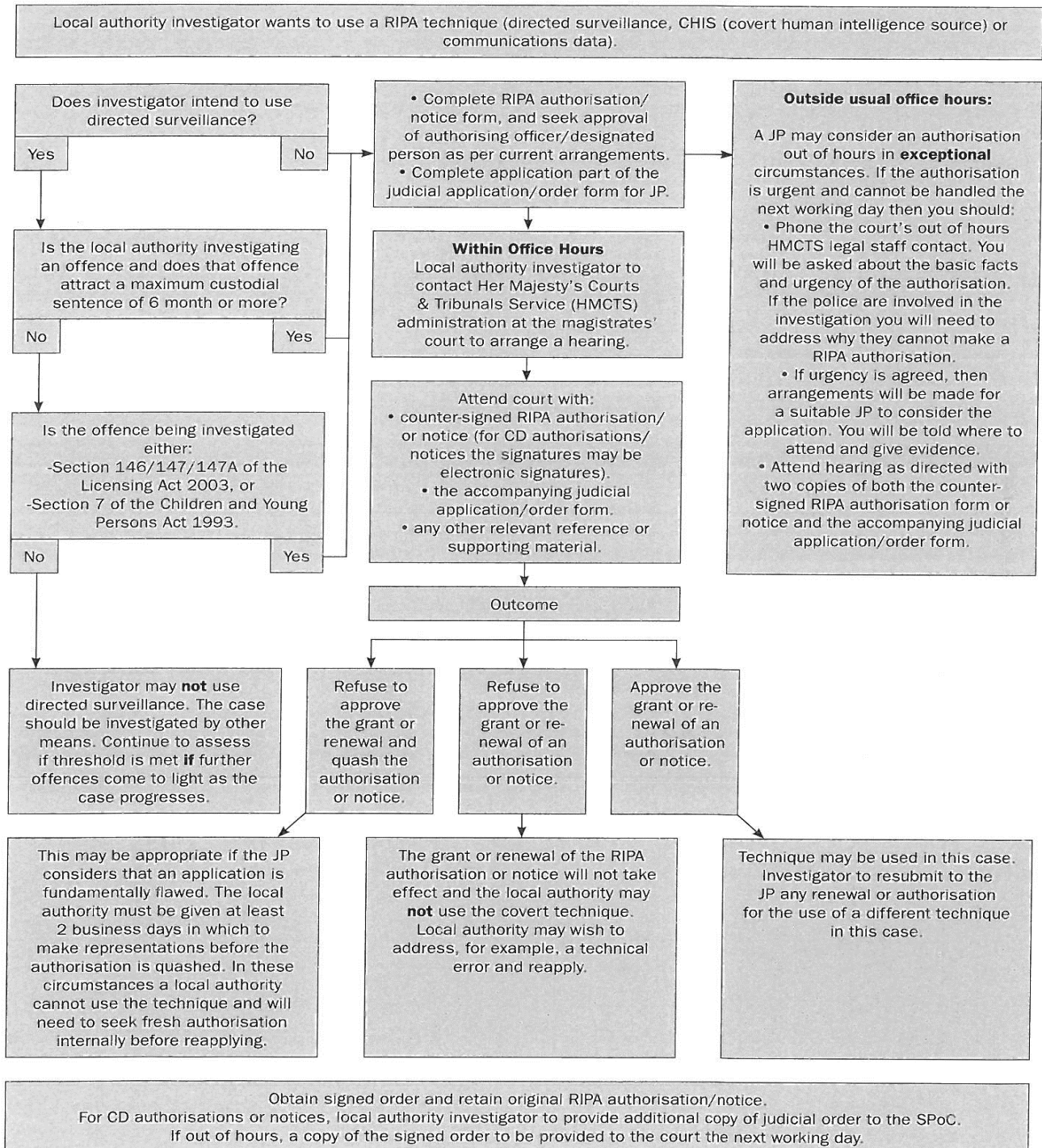
List of Designated Posts Nominated to Authorise Surveillance Activity in Bridgend County Borough Council under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

<u>Post</u>	<u>Directorate/Department</u>
Chief Executive	Chief Executive
Head of Partnership Services	Chief Executive
Head of Operations – Community Services	Communities

RIPA AUTHORISATION FLOW CHART



LOCAL AUTHORITY PROCEDURE: APPLICATION TO A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE SEEKING AN ORDER TO APPROVE THE GRANT OF A RIPA AUTHORISATION OR NOTICE



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Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	OMUBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER 2023-2024
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	The Annual Letter must be presented to Cabinet and the Governance and Audit Committee.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for Cabinet to note the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023/24.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) is independent of all government bodies and has legal powers to investigate complaints about public services and independent care providers in Wales. They also investigate complaints that Members of local government bodies have breached their authority's Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 The PSOW reports annually on the number of complaints against public bodies received by its office.
- 2.3 The Complaints Officer is the Contact Officer for the PSOW and the Monitoring Officer is responsible for liaising with the PSOW regarding Member Code of Conduct complaints.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 **Appendix A** provides the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2023-2024.
- 3.2 The number of complaints against the Authority for the period 2023-2024 was 59 compared with 55 in 2022-2023. The figure for 2023-2024 represents 0.41 complaints received per 1000 residents. Childrens Social Services and Planning / Building Control attracted the largest number of complaints. 10 cases were out of jurisdiction,

23 were premature, 18 were closed after initial consideration, 8 were settled by working with the Ombudsman for early resolution. No complaints proceeded to investigation.

- 3.3 15 Code of Conduct complaints against the Authority's Councillors were received by the Ombudsman's Office in this period of which 14 were not investigated and 1 was deemed no action necessary. 18 Code of Conduct complaints were received against Town and Community Councils in Bridgend County 4 of which were referred to the Standards Committee, 1 of which a decision was taken not to investigate, and the remainder were deemed no action necessary.
- 3.4 The Complaints Standards Authority publishes datasets on complaints handled by local authorities. These datasets are published on the Ombudsman's website and on the Council's website. This data shows that last year, 14% of the Council's complaints were referred to PSOW.
- 3.5 The Annual letter was also presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 28 November 2024. The Committee requested that a further report be presented to them in January 2025 regarding the Authority's compliance performance and the future recording of compliments.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2023-2024.

Background documents:

None

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Ask for: Communications



01656 641150



Caseinfo@ombudsman.wales

Date: 9 September 2024

Councillor John Spanswick
Bridgend County Borough Council

By email only

cllr.john.spanswick@bridgend.gov.uk

mark.shephard@bridgend.gov.uk

Annual Letter 2023/24

Dear Councillor Spanswick

Role of PSOW

As you know, the role of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is to consider complaints about public services, to investigate alleged breaches of the councillor Code of Conduct, to set standards for complaints handling by public bodies and to drive improvement in complaints handling and learning from complaints. I also undertake investigations into public services on my own initiative.

Purpose of letter

This letter is intended to provide an update on the work of my office, to share key issues for local government in Wales and to highlight any particular issues for your organisation, together with actions I would like your organisation to take.

Overview of 2023/24

This letter, as always, coincides with my Annual Report – “A New Chapter Unfolds” – and comes at a time when public services continue to be in the spotlight, and under considerable pressures. My office has seen another increase in the number of people asking for our help – a 17% increase in overall contacts compared to the previous year, with nearly 10,000 enquiries and complaints received. Our caseload has increased substantially - by 37% - since 2019.

ombwdsmon.cymru
holwch@ombwdsmon.cymru
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
Rydym yn hapus i dderbyn ac
yrraeth yn y Gymraeg.

ombudsman.wales
ask@ombudsman.wales
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
We are happy to accept and respond
to correspondence in Welsh.

During 2023/24 we considered and closed more enquiries and complaints than we ever have done before, and we reduced the average cost for each case and investigation. We started the year with a focus on reducing our aging cases, those over 12 months old, by 50% by the end of the year. These cases are often the most complex and distressing for the people making the complaint. I am extremely pleased to say we exceeded this target, reducing our aged investigations by over 70%. We are now well on track to meeting our objective to complete investigation of complaints within 12 months.

Public Services Complaints and compliance with recommendations

In total 1,108 complaints about local authorities were made to us last year – broadly the same number as the previous year. During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 14% of local authority complaints – a similar proportion to recent years.

We received 59 complaints about Bridgend County Borough Council in 2023/24 and closed 59. Bridgend County Borough Council's intervention rate was 14%. Further information on complaints about your organisation can be found in the appendices.

We made 18 recommendations to your council during the year. To ensure that our investigations and reports drive improvement, we follow up compliance with the recommendations agreed with your organisation. In 2023/24, 20 recommendations were due (some recommendations were made in the previous year) and 35% were complied with in the timescale agreed. The remainder were complied with, but outside the timescales agreed, or remained outstanding as at 9 April 2024.

Recommendations and timescales for complying with recommendations are always agreed with the public body concerned before being finalised, and we therefore expect organisations to comply within the timescales agreed.

Our Code of Conduct work

My role is to investigate allegations that councillors have breached their Code of Conduct. Where an investigation finds evidence to support the complaint on a matter which is serious enough to require a referral in the public interest, these cases are referred either to the local Standards Committee or to the Adjudication Panel for Wales for consideration.

In 2023/24, we received 16% more Code of Conduct complaints than the previous year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. My office made 21 referrals – to Standards Committees or the Adjudication Panel for Wales, an increase from 12 the previous year.

I am grateful to your Monitoring Officer for their positive engagement with my office over the last year. We will continue to engage with them on matters relating to the ethical standards framework, including Local Resolution Procedures this year.

Independent Review

As you will be aware, I became aware of inappropriate comments, of a political nature, made by a member of my staff via social media. These comments were widely reported in the media. The member of staff in question was suspended and subsequently resigned. However, the comments prompted questions about my office's work on councillor Code of Conduct cases.

In view of the seriousness of the matter, I commissioned Dr Melissa McCullough to conduct an independent review of our Code of Conduct work, and I have published the full [Terms of Reference](#) for that review. I and my staff are engaging closely with the Monitoring Officer Group and the National Forum for Standards Committee Chairs in relation to this matter. I will be publishing Dr McCullough's final report on completion of the review and sharing it with the Senedd's Finance Committee this Autumn.

Supporting improvement of public services

We continued our work on supporting improvement in public services last year and worked on our second wider Own Initiative investigation. The investigation includes four local authorities and considers carers' needs assessments. I am grateful to the investigated authorities for their co-operation and candour throughout the year, and we look forward to sharing our finalised report this Autumn. This will make recommendations to the investigated authorities and will ask all local authorities across Wales to make similar improvements.

We have continued our work on complaints handling standards for public bodies in Wales and now have 56 public bodies following our model complaints handling policy. These public bodies account for around 85% of the complaints we receive. We have continued our work to publish complaints statistics, gathered from public bodies, with data published twice a year.

We continued our work to publish complaints statistics into a third year, with data now published twice a year. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 17% of complaints made to Bridgend County Borough Council's went on to be referred to PSOW.

Action we would like your organisation to take


Further to this letter can I ask that your Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.
- Consider the data in this letter, alongside your own data, to understand more about your performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and your organisation's compliance with recommendations made by my office.

- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at the earliest opportunity.

I would like to thank you, and your officers, for your continued openness and engagement with my office. Our information shows that local authorities are looking into more complaints than ever before and are using information from complaints to deliver better outcomes for the people of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michelle Morris in black ink.

Michelle Morris
Public Services Ombudsman

Cc. Mark Shephard, Chief Executive, Bridgend County Borough Council



Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1,000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	15	0.22
Bridgend County Borough Council	59	0.41
Caerphilly County Borough Council	56	0.32
Cardiff Council*	149	0.41
Carmarthenshire County Council	69	0.37
Ceredigion County Council	32	0.45
Conwy County Borough Council	36	0.31
Denbighshire County Council**	31	0.32
Flintshire County Council	51	0.33
Cyngor Gwynedd	38	0.32
Isle of Anglesey County Council	38	0.55
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	12	0.20
Monmouthshire County Council	29	0.31
Neath Port Talbot Council	35	0.25
Newport City Council	52	0.33
Pembrokeshire County Council	40	0.32
Powys County Council	54	0.41
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	64	0.27
Swansea Council	81	0.34
Torfaen County Borough Council	14	0.15
Vale of Glamorgan Council	77	0.58
Wrexham County Borough Council	76	0.56
Total	1108	0.36
* inc 2 Rent Smart Wales		
** inc 1 Wales Penalty Processing Partnership		



Appendix B - Received by Subject

Bridgend County Borough Council	Complaints Received	% share
Adult Social Services	4	7%
Benefits Administration	1	2%
Children's Social Services	13	22%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	0	0%
Complaints Handling	11	19%
Covid-19	0	0%
Education	3	5%
Environment and Environmental Health	3	5%
Finance and Taxation	2	3%
Housing	6	10%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	11	19%
Roads and Transport	3	5%
Various Other	2	3%
Total	59	



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Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes (* denotes intervention)

Bridgend County Borough Council		% Share
Out of Jurisdiction	10	17%
Premature	23	39%
Other cases closed after initial consideration	18	31%
Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	8	14%
Discontinued	0	0%
Other Reports - Not Upheld	0	0%
Other Reports Upheld*	0	0%
Public Interest Reports*	0	0%
Special Interest Reports*	0	0%
Total	59	



Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	16	6%
Bridgend County Borough Council	8	59	14%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	3	48	6%
Cardiff Council	28	144	19%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	0	3	0%
Carmarthenshire County Council	8	60	13%
Ceredigion County Council	7	32	22%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	37	0%
Denbighshire County Council	2	32	6%
Denbighshire County Council - Wales Penalty Processing Partnership	0	1	0%
Flintshire County Council	8	57	14%
Cyngor Gwynedd	6	39	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	10	41	24%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	3	14	21%
Monmouthshire County Council	3	32	9%
Neath Port Talbot Council	5	34	15%
Newport City Council	5	51	10%
Pembrokeshire County Council	7	38	18%
Powys County Council	7	53	13%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	11	63	17%
Swansea Council	12	77	16%
Torfaen County Borough Council	2	14	14%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	15	71	21%
Wrexham County Borough Council	7	79	9%
Total	158	1095	14%



Appendix E – Compliance performance comparison

Local Authority	Number of recommendations made in 2023-24	Number of recommendations falling due in 2023-24	% of recommendations, complied with on time
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	1	100%
Bridgend County Borough Council	18	20	35%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	9	9	11%
Cardiff Council	74	75	92%
Carmarthenshire County Council	25	25	52%
Ceredigion County Council	23	23	78%
Swansea Council	29	32	63%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	1	0%
Denbighshire County Council	5	6	67%
Flintshire County Council	17	17	59%
Cyngor Gwynedd	12	19	74%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	26	24	92%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	11	9	56%
Monmouthshire County Council	4	4	25%
Neath Port Talbot Council	14	14	29%
Newport City Council	10	7	43%
Pembrokeshire County Council	24	23	96%
Powys County Council	18	16	31%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	26	26	77%
Torfaen County Borough Council	3	3	67%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	50	48	92%
Wrexham County Borough Council	16	19	42%



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Appendix F - Code of Conduct Complaints

**Bridgend County Borough
Council**

Investigations	Decision not to investigate	14
	Discontinued	0
	No evidence of breach	0
	No action necessary	1
	Refer to Adjudication Panel	0
	Refer to Standards Committee	0
	Total	15



Appendix G - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Decision not to investigate	Investigations				Total	
		Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel		Refer to Standards Committee
Brackla Community Council	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Bridgend Town Council	3	0	0	1	0	2	6
Coity Higher Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laleston Community Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Llangynwyd Middle Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maesteg Town Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Newcastle Higher Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pencoed Town Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Porthcawl Town Council	4	0	0	0	0	2	6
Ynysawdre Community Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1



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Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. These complaints are contextualised by the population of each authority.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

Appendix E shows the compliance performance of each Local Authority.

Appendix F shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix G shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.

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