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# Access and Recreation

## Key Data/Evidence shows

**1550+**  
kilometres

Public rights of  
way across Cwm  
Taf Morgannwg

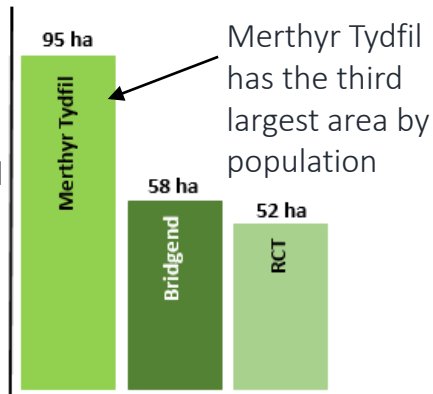


**57%**

Households in Merthyr Tydfil that  
live near accessible, natural green  
spaces

There are 95 hectares of accessible  
natural green space in Merthyr Tydfil  
compared to 58 hectares in Bridgend; and  
52 hectares in RCT.

This proved invaluable when supporting  
communities to maintain good physical  
& mental health during lockdown



In 2020; Merthyr Tydfil secured 4 Green Flag awards:



Cyfarthfa Park



Parc  
Taf Bargoed



Aberfan  
Cemetery



Thomastown Park

## Key Challenges Identified

Providing more opportunities for safe access and recreation for all by using the natural assets of the CTM area can bring benefits not just to local communities but also the environment and the economy.

Maintaining these open, accessible spaces in the light of the high housing needs will be a tension which must be managed

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- The needs assessment exercise identified the opportunity of **walking groups introducing people to their green spaces**, thus connecting people and helping them learn about heritage and the area.
- Accessibility** was an issue with some green spaces being inaccessible to those with mobility issues. Whilst disabled people find nature good for mental wellbeing, many felt excluded. The deaf community said accessing information through sign language was hard, transport links to green areas was poor and being able to use public transport is an issue for many.

# Air Quality

## Key Data/Evidence shows

Public Health Wales describes **poor air quality** as an urgent **health crisis**, second only to smoking

**No.1** Smoking



**No.2** Poor air quality

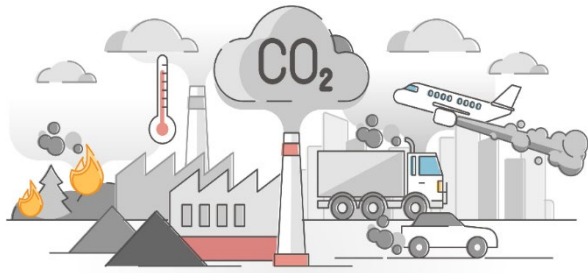


Air pollution is estimated to cost Wales

**£1 billion every year**

This includes lost work days and costs to the Health Service

Road traffic emissions account for 2/3 of air pollution; producing both particulate matter and NO<sub>2</sub>



There are a number of **air quality management areas** across Cwm Taf Morgannwg:

Bridgend

**1 (one)**

Merthyr Tydfil

**1 (one)**

RCT

**16 (sixteen)**

## Key Challenges Identified

Poor air quality has huge social costs through its impacts on health, and adverse effects on wildlife and biodiversity.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- There are opportunities to tackle this problem through **promoting and implementing active travel and sustainable transport solutions**. For longer journeys, use of public transport, together with walking and cycling also supports improvement. Both of these will reduce the amount of vehicles on the road if successful; and would generate a small improvement in air quality.

# Biodiversity

## Key Data/Evidence shows

Without a healthy eco-system, the world would slowly grind to a halt. If we experience declining ecosystem resilience, this threatens the ability of natural resources to provide benefits to current and future generations.

Percentage of species in Wales at risk of extinction **17%**



There is a decline in the average abundance of wildlife by **13%**; with **6%** of this happening in the last decade

Pressures that have contributed to the loss of biodiversity include:



Farm management



Woodland management



Soil pollution



Hydrological change



Increasing urbanisation



Climate change



Invasive species

## Key Challenges Identified

Responding to the loss of biodiversity and the nature emergency

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- The local community engagement work identified the importance of protecting wildlife and biodiversity to give environmental wellbeing with suggestions to **create habitats and connected greenways, planting trees and forest and reducing litter that poses a risk to wildlife.**
- Regeneration of the town centre, the impact of building developments and the need to protect the environment for future generations were raised by communities. **More explicitly publicising how these have been considered may help to support improved understanding of the steps being taken to manage biodiversity needs could help allay concerns.**

# Businesses

## Key Data/Evidence shows

There is an overall trend showing a decrease in activity in the retail sector across Wales; with the data for active enterprises across Cwm Taf Morgannwg showing the numbers have remained relatively steady across Merthyr Tydfil; RCT and Bridgend

**-64%**

The impact of the emergency lockdown situations arising as a result of Covid-19 was immediate and significant – business recorded a 64% decrease in turnover between 18 May and 31 May 2020

Businesses recorded a decrease in turnover of more than half **23%**

Across Cwm Taf Morgannwg; HMRC data shows the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) was heavily accessed by all three areas making up the region in June 2020

Merthyr Tydfil

**6,000**

RCT

**23,400**

Bridgend

**15,300**

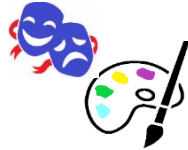
The business sectors most affected by the pandemic include:



Accommodation  
Places to Stay



Food services



Theatre &  
The Arts



Tourism



Retail/shopping

## Key Challenges Identified

Supporting the recovery of businesses in the sectors most affected by the pandemic (e.g.) leisure and tourism; and hospitality

Supporting businesses to diversify to meet environmental challenges; changes with construction and utilities etc.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- There was a concern that without good local job opportunities young people would migrate out of the area. It was important to those involved in the engagement activities that improved jobs and skills would bring more income to the local economy as well as retaining 'local talent' providing opportunities to younger people.
- This work can link to schools, further and higher education as well as the local businesses and Cardiff City Region skills partnership.

# Children Receiving Care and Support

## Key Data/Evidence shows

The number of children receiving care and support fluctuates from year to year across the Cwm Taf foot-print



In Merthyr Tydfil, the number of children receiving care and support 2020 reduced

**485**  **430**  
2019 2020

There are many factors leading to children requiring care and support; some of which are shown below. In Merthyr Tydfil, data shows that in 2020, the following issues led to children needing care and support



Parental  
substance and  
alcohol misuse

**37**

Up 4  
on 2019



Parental  
learning  
disabilities

**3**

Down 1  
on 2019



Parental  
mental ill-  
health

**31**

Down 3  
on 2019



Parental  
physical ill-  
health

**6**

Down 1  
on 2019



Domestic  
Abuse

**38**

Down 5  
on 2019

## Key Challenges Identified

Responding to the early signs of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to provide early support and interventions to prevent escalation to statutory services

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Early Intervention and prevention services are now embedded in the support for children and families with the **Flying Start** and **Families First** programmes. Both these programmes have a priority for support in the early years.
- **Community Hubs** which provides a local and more community focussed service to those who are accessing support. This can help with future use of services as and when required.
- Children having access to **Speech and Language Therapy** as part of the offer is crucial service for those with communication needs. The impact of not dealing with communication issues early on can have a detrimental effect on children as they progress through school, it is therefore an important element of the offer.





# Community Safety

## Key Data/Evidence shows



Violence against the person is the highest recorded crime across the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership footprint

Hate crime has been seen to have increased year on year in Merthyr Tydfil

2018/19 - 60  
2019/20 - 87  
2020/21 - 110



2,000+

Victims of domestic abuse were supported in Cwm Taf Morgannwg during the last year

In Merthyr Tydfil, data shows that the instances of domestic abuse crime by volume is steadily decreasing



Data shows us the number of anti-social behaviour occurrences has increased year on year in Merthyr Tydfil

2018/19 370 instances  
2019/20 567 instances  
2020/21 795 instances



## Key Challenges Identified

Where the all-Wales data shows an gradual increase in the number of people feeling safe at home, walking in their local area, and when travelling has increased; data captured for Cwm Taf shows a decline from 2016/17 (62.8%); to 2018/19 (58.6); with people aged 75+ years less likely to feel safe

Hate crime has increased year on year in Merthyr Tydfil; with the highest level of reports of hate crime relating to racial or sexual orientation.

Anti-social behaviour occurrences have increased significantly over the past 3 years (though for the period 2020-21, the data includes details of instances where Covid-19 regulations were breached, and this factor should be considered)

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- There are opportunities to raise the profile of community safety initiatives across the area to support communities to better understand what is happening in their areas , with a view to reducing fear of crime.
- Review and refocus existing community safety strategies/plans at a local level; and support delivery of these with a Communications Plan so that evidence of how key messages have been cascaded and the impact of these on incident levels.
- Merthyr Tydfil data is showing a higher number of reported hate crime relating to racial or sexual orientation. These continued to increase in 2020/21 with a 60% increase in reported hate crime relating to sexual orientation. **Consideration could be given to activities / exercises to challenge and educate people**

# Dementia

## Key Data/Evidence shows

For the **North Merthyr**  
GP cluster

**223 (0.6%)**

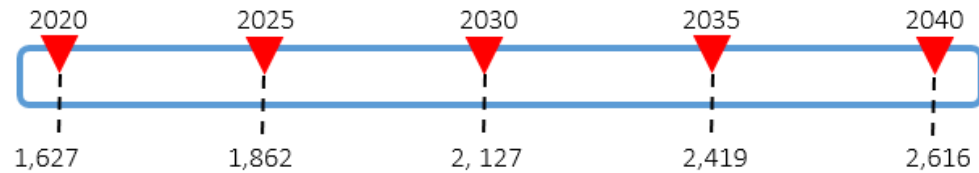
of the population have received a  
dementia diagnosis

For the **South Merthyr**  
GP cluster

**110 (0.4%)**

of the population have received a  
dementia diagnosis

**Dementia data projections** show the predicted number of people aged 65+ years who will have dementia will continue to increase



The Alzheimer's Society highlight a number of focus areas which, if addressed, can **reduce the dementia risk factors**: these include:



Physical  
activity



A Balanced  
Diet



Exercising  
the Mind



Quit  
smoking



Reduce  
Alcohol  
Consumption

## Key Challenges Identified

Dementia in the region is increasing with a stark rise in RCT compared to Bridgend and Merthyr. Initiatives in the communities and in work providing support and knowledge around dementia will assist those who are living with dementia as well as family and friends carers

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

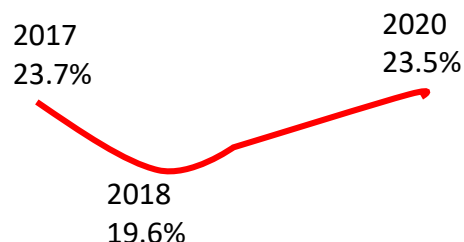
- Feedback from the engagement activities identified the need for improved health and social care with more investment in preventative services. There was discussion around **more use of social prescribing to improve wellbeing** and a **greater consideration for the role of carers**, this included those caring for someone living with dementia.
- Plans are already being developed to deal with the increase in dementia services and support that will be needed in the future from a health and social care perspective. These take account of the need to **provide more community-based resources** which is being progressed such as the Health and Wellbeing Hubs in Cwm Taf.



# Economic Inactivity

## Key Data/Evidence shows

The economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 years (excluding students) had been undergoing recovery; however, the impact of Covid-19 has seen a rise in inactivity levels



Those aged between  
**25 – 49**  
years have the lowest economic activity rate

2020 data shows females aged 25-49 had an economic inactivity rate of  
**20.2%**



Whereas 2020 data shows males aged 25-49 had an economic inactivity rate of  
**12.3%**



The Universal Credit (UC) data provided by DWP shows that the number of people in Merthyr Tydfil claiming UC has grown  
2019 - **2,113** to 2021 - **6,469**



Wards with the highest number of UC claimants in Merthyr Tydfil are:

**Gurnos**  
**Dowlais Cyfarthfa**

Wards with the lowest number of UC claimants in Merthyr Tydfil are:

**Vaynor**  
**Bedlinog Park**



UC claimants may be claiming but still be in work – they could be in lower paid roles and need a top up to meet their basic expenses

## Key Challenges Identified

The impact of Covid has been difficult for some businesses – if this were to continue it could result in more people becoming economically inactive

Identifying the areas of need and providing skills training to fill gaps where there are opportunities could be hampered as a result of uncertainty over future funding for service which have received longer term funding from European (ESF) programme funds.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Data shows the inactivity rates for females compared to males is higher across all areas– considering how we can **enhance support available to women, especially around childcare**; could support them to develop their skills and seek part-time work
- There are a growing number of households who are working and are in absolute low income. By **developing a range of activities that offer training and improve skills** was key to improving job prospects and confidence – especially in emerging industries
- Depending on the funding allocation which is likely to be from central government there is again an opportunity to **work with the Cardiff City Region** to plan how this may be addressed, possibly with some opportunities for pooling funds.

# Education & Employment

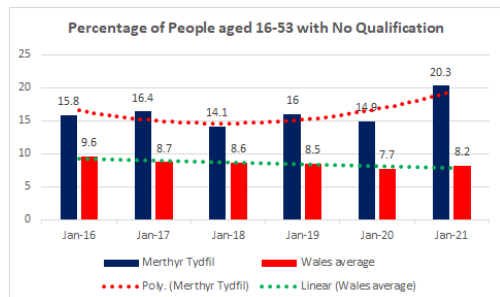
## Key Data/Evidence shows

Data shows that in all areas of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg footprint, attainment levels are lower than the Wales average (as well as being lower than the Central South Wales region. The same is true for neighbouring authorities (Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen).



There is an attainment gap between those eligible for free school meals and those who are not: The data for 2019/20 shows that the gap has increased for grades A\*-A but decreased for grades A-C.

Pupils were awarded grades without having to take examinations which *may* have made a difference to the grading for 2019/20. The grades were based on the 'teacher's best professional estimate of what the pupil would achieve had they been able to sit an exam'. The longer-term impact of Covid has yet to be realised.



Data shows that across all adult age ranges (16-64 years), Merthyr Tydfil has the highest level of adults with no qualifications.

## Key Challenges Identified

The impact of Covid has been difficult for pupils and learners to manage; the fragmented patterns of access to learning is anticipated to have a negative affect on achievement of qualifications.

The mental health and wellbeing of all learners was to some extent adversely affected by the impact of the pandemic and this was particularly so for the most vulnerable learners – this could take some time to be restored to previous levels

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

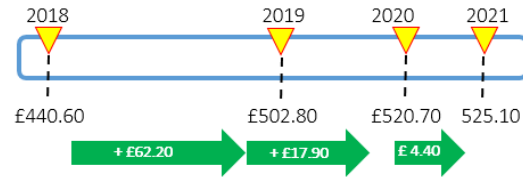
- The use of **work experience and/or volunteering opportunities** helps to provide real-life experience to young people
- By **better identifying current job demands**, we could ensure the support we offer to young job seekers is targeted to where demand exists
- **Anticipating the future business growth and development areas** (e.g.) renewable/alternative energies; data; or technology; and providing targeted training for young people to begin to develop applicable (and where possible, transferable) skills could remove barriers to young people who want to enter the world of work



# Employment & Income

## Key Data/Evidence shows

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earning data shows that in January 2022; the full-time workers **weekly gross pay** had increased year on year



The industries with the highest number of people work in in Merthyr Tydfil are:



Public administration, defence services:



Retail and Wholesale



Transport Services



Production



Construction

Claimant Count data shows the number of **people aged 16-64** that are claiming **out of work benefits** in Merthyr Tydfil is

**1,475 (3.9%)**



Claimant Count data also shows the age group where the **highest percentage of people claiming 'out of work' benefits** is:



**18-21 years (3.9%)**



## Key Challenges Identified

The rate that the cost of living is rising in not keeping pace with the increase in income for people across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Childcare will be an issue for some families where they don't have family living locally to assist in caring for children. The cost of childcare can also be prohibitive for some families on low incomes

Tackling poverty continues to be a long term challenge across the County Borough

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- The current situation relating to **lack of staff entering the health and social care workforce** will be a challenge for the near future; but could also offer an opportunity is the training and development offer is a good one.
- The percentage of females who are in part time employment is higher than males so there could be an opportunity to look at **how males can access jobs in social care** environments
- Childcare will be an issue for some families where they don't have family living locally to assist in caring for children. The cost of childcare can also be prohibitive for some families on low incomes – by **increasing promotion of support to access quality, affordable and accessible childcare**; this could assist in reducing economic inactivity levels

# Flooding

## Key Data/Evidence shows

918

Residential properties are at risk of **fluvial flooding** (e.g.) rivers bursting their banks. **90** of these are at high risk

3,963

Residential properties are at risk of **surface water flooding**. **1,707** of these are at high risk.



Approximately **650** non-residential properties are at risk of flooding



**3 areas**

in Merthyr Tydfil are in the top 100 areas in Wales at significant risk of *fluvial flooding*:

- Merthyr Tydfil
- Troedryhiw
- Merthyr Vale



**FLOOD  
WARNING**

**5 areas**

in Merthyr Tydfil are in the top 100 areas in Wales at significant risk of *surface water flooding*:

- Merthyr Tydfil
- Abercanaid
- Pentrebach
- Troedryhiw
- Merthyr Vale

**533**

**(30.9%)**

Properties that have signed up to the Flood Warning Service run by Natural Resources Wales

## Key Challenges Identified

To reduce the risk to people and businesses from the impacts of flooding

The financial impact of flooding can be catastrophic to communities

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Both RCT and Bridgend have **catchment flood plans** – the needs assessment says these aren't in place in Merthyr Tydfil so there's an opportunity to develop these
- **Getting communities engaged and better prepared for the possibility of flooding** is a long-term aim. Home or business owners whose properties are at risk of flooding can receive NRW warning messages by phone, email or text message in the event of possible flooding.
- Totally removing the risk of flooding is not possible and so adaptation, **developing greater community and business resilience will be key features of how we move forward**. Understanding the extent of the risk by modelling the whole water catchment will be an important factor in planning for the future.

# Fly-Tipping

## Key Data/Evidence shows

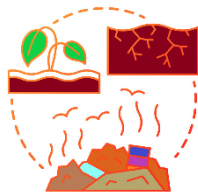
Fly-tipping poses a threat to both people and and wildlife through:



Disease  
transmission  
through waste



Pollution

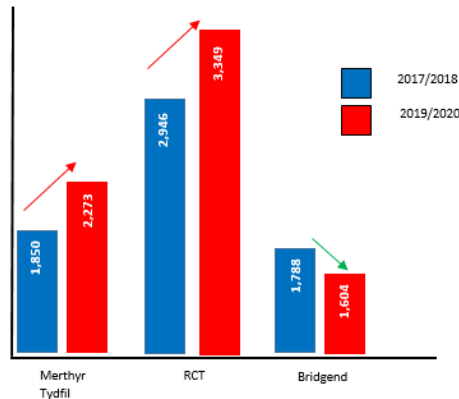


Soil  
contamination



Flooding through  
blocked drains  
etc.

There is an increase in the number of instances of fly-tipping across the whole of the Cwm Taf area: data showing the increase between 2017/18 and 2019/20 with particular issues noted in Merthyr Tydfil and RCT



In Merthyr Tydfil; waste collection teams have a strong record of responding to reports of fly-tipping.

100%

‘Clearance rate for reported fly-tipping incidents within 5 days’ - below Welsh Government’s target



## Key Challenges Identified

To reduce the amount of fly tipping and its effects on the environment and communities

The risk of the number of fly tipping increasing as a result of the cost of living pressures currently being faced by businesses and householders alike.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- There is an opportunity for the **various agencies to work together to target hot spots** and support communities that are subject to fly tipping and littering;
- The actions required are not just enforcement but also **monitoring and evaluation** of the problem, **education and awareness raising** leading to a change of behaviour.
- Working more closely with fast food outlets** to ensure they undertake clean up of packaging discarded from their outlets would be a great way to begin this improvement.



# Landslips

## Key Data/Evidence shows

In the Future Generations Commissioner's 'Future Trends' Report; it is noted that some of the most acute impacts of climate change are linked to extreme meteorological events such as



Heavy rain



Snow storms



Drought



Heavy storms causing damage

These can cause or exacerbate other high impact events such as flooding, landslips, wildfires by de-stabilising the landscape.

The CTM area, as with other parts of Wales, has a legacy from its industrial past in the form of colliery spoil tips from coal mining. There are a number of coal tips across Cwm Taf Morgannwg:

59

Merthyr Tydfil

31

Bridgend

75

RCT



There have been instances in the past where landslips have been experienced across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough – these have had major consequences (bridges under-mined; housing put at risk; and significant loss of life), this means the risk of landslips occurring is rising as the impact of global warming become more evident

## Key Challenges Identified

To protect people and the environment from landslips

The impact of climate change; and the effect this is having on our weather patterns means that landslips should remain a key consideration as part of the Council's disaster prevention agenda

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- There is no doubt that coal tip safety remains a concern for communities and the environment. It was identified as an issue through the community engagement exercise. There is an opportunity to **develop a long-term plan**.
- Carrying out extensive work from the various agencies to **monitor and maintain stability** and carrying out necessary works will assist in providing reassurance to communities.
- Integral to any plan is the opportunity to **build on the strong sense of community** that was demonstrated following the most recent storms causing landslips (and flooding). The plan can also ensure that cultural and environmental opportunities can be integral to matters of safety.



# Mental Health

## Key Data/Evidence shows

Evidence supports the existing strong link between poor mental health and economic deprivation.

	Rate of GP-recorded health condition	WIMD rank
Penydarren 1	32.3	7
Park 3	31.1	153
Dowlais 1	30.9	127



**4.6%** of residents across Merthyr Tydfil are in receipt of a mental health-related benefit

StatsWales shows the increase in the number of **children and young people attending counselling** in Merthyr Tydfil has increased year on year, from **219** in 2016-17 to **384** in 2020-21. The predominant issues relating to referrals are:



Anger



Family



Depression



Anxiety



Low self-esteem

## Key Challenges Identified

Feedback from different communities during engagement consistently identified Mental Health as an issue in accessing support as well as being a challenge for the future.

Ensuring access to a range of activities and support in communities which improves mental health and provides early support to those who need it to prevent escalation. The recovery from the impact of the pandemic will be a key consideration in this.

Ensuring that mental health issues are recognised early and provision of support is available early to enable effective intervention to prevent escalation.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Interactions with health services are inconsistent and can negatively impact on how we can work with them to deliver more targeted support.
- As a core PSB member; MTCBC could raise this topic at PSB as an opportunity to explore making mental health a core objective in the refocused regional well-being plan with a view to ensuring all those who could have an influence on improving the mental health response activities.
- Consider using land owned to establish more allotments; helping mental health and supporting an improved situation around food poverty

# Heritage, Culture & Welsh Language

## Key Data/Evidence shows

Merthyr Tydfil has **233** listed buildings within its boundaries including

- The deserted mining village at Ffos-y-Fran has been designated as a Scheduled Monument (GM496)
- **Historic Park categorisation** has been given to Cyfarthfa Castle;
- Cefn Viaduct;
- Former Miners' Hall (Town Centre);
- Theatre Royal;
- St David's Church;
- Pandy Clock;
- Nightingale Street, Abercanaid; and
- Dowlais, Merthyr and Treharris libraries



Libraries not only loan books - they provide a range of activities for children/young people and adults. These activities often link with culture and heritage of the local area.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have recorded a gradual increase in the number of people able to speak Welsh in Merthyr Tydfil

2019 - **18.5%**  
2020 - **19.8%**  
2021 - **20.2%**

The highest percentage of residents in Merthyr Tydfil that speak, read and write Welsh are in the following LSOAs:

Treharris 1 - **12.4%**  
Cyfarthfa 1 - **10.5%**  
Treharris 3 - **9.5%**



## Key Challenges Identified

Damage to our cultural heritage assets as a result of temperature, precipitation, groundwater and landscape changes.

Meeting the challenging targets set down in relation to Wales having a million Welsh speakers by 2050

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Further funding is being sought to **deliver a range of activities which engages children and adults.**
- The link between libraries and culture was captured by the engagement; with calls for **more activities; books and knowledge relating to Welsh language and culture**
- Some area highlighted in the engagement was **affordability of access to some leisure facilities.** This was especially true for young people who talked about the cost of doing activities from sports to piano grades. Considering this when costing services is critical to supporting a developing demand on manageable terms

# Housing and Homelessness

## Key Data/Evidence shows

The housing stock data for Registered Social Landlords shows a slight decline between 2016-17 and 2020-21

**-0.6%**



49 affordable units were built in 2020/2021 – an increase in the levels built in the previous 4 years

The average rent differs for Private and Social Landlords. In 2019, data shows the following:

	Social Rent	Private Rent
Merthyr Tydfil	<b>£375.87</b>	<b>£493.57</b>
Wales	<b>£487.29</b>	<b>£598.19</b>



Data on Stats Wales shows that in 2019, people were prevented from becoming homeless in Merthyr Tydfil

**51**



**141** people were supported to obtain alternative accommodation

The success rate of homelessness prevention is **higher in Merthyr Tydfil than in the rest of Cwm Taf**, with the main area of support provided relating to financial, mediation and conciliation



## Key Challenges Identified

The initiatives to support the homeless living on the streets during Covid have been successful for some in engaging with services. Being able to continue to support those who are homeless in going forward can reduce the number living on the streets; however, sufficient funding must be in place to do so

Managing the tension about meeting housing demand whilst also maintaining green spaces for the use of communities

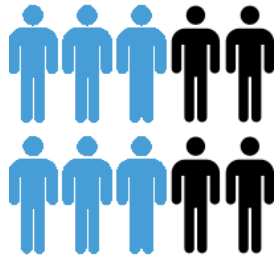
## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Engagement with the communities identified that **affordability of housing was a significant concern** for many either for buying a property or renting and there is an opportunity to work with housing services to ensure this message remains prominent;
- The Cardiff City Regional plans include **support for house building** to address viability issues preventing the progress of new housing developments in the area.
- Future planning applications should be advised of the **changing housing needs in the area** prior to their submitting plans for new developments



# Obesity

## Key Data/Evidence shows



60%

Adults identified as being overweight or obese, with 24% of these being obese

12.6%

Children in Wales were categorised as obese in 2018/19 compared to 12.0% in 2017/18.



Merthyr Tydfil has the **third highest number of fast food outlets** per 100,000 population (118) in Wales, with only Gwynedd (133) and Blaenau Gwent (125) having more.



Public Health Wales Data shows there can be links between obesity and diabetes; musculoskeletal illnesses and heart issues – all of which can be work-limiting health conditions

Evidence suggests obesity is often made worse by lifestyle factors including:



Smoker status



Physical Activity



Educational attainment

## Key Challenges Identified

To encourage and support people to take part in activities which promote healthy behaviours to support a healthy weight

Introducing children to a healthy and active lifestyle early to prevent embedded unhealthy behaviours in the future which result in unhealthy weight gain. Educating children about the importance of a varied diet to ensure they are able to make good choices.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Take an active role in providing **signposting to information sources** such as Public Health Wales' 'Change for Life Wales' website ensuring people have up-to-date information to support them;
- Ensure sufficient resource is available to deliver the Council's **Active Travel programme**; and continue to seek feedback from citizens around what will help them;
- Revisit Welsh Government's '**Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales**' strategy to identify how the themes contained within that can be responded to;
- Ensure work with Health partners linked to the '**Child Measurement**' programme is sustained and the data used to inform service planning.

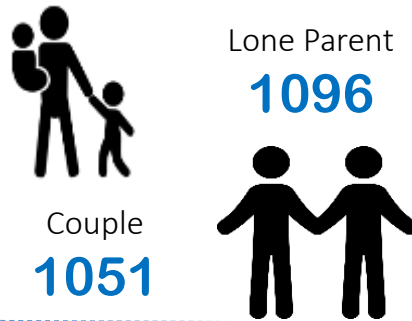
# Poverty

## Key Data/Evidence shows

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation shows there are 2 lower super output areas in Merthyr Tydfil that have **deep rooted poverty**. These are:

	WIMD ranking
Merthyr Vale 2	<b>17</b>
Penydarren 2	<b>4</b>

Provisional DWP data shows the number **living in absolute low income** in Merthyr Tydfil are:



The wards with the highest number living in absolute low income are:

Gurnos Ward  
**301**

Penydarren Ward  
**271**

Cyfarthfa Ward  
**256**



There has been a significant increase in the total number of parcels issued by Food Banks

2019/2020 - **3,623**  
2020/2021 - **5,218**



From October 2021, Welsh Government estimates that  
**196,000 (14%)**  
of all households in Wales will be living in fuel poverty

## Key Challenges Identified

Merthyr Tydfil has a significant proportion of households situated in areas of high deprivation – supporting communities to manage and emerge from the difficulties they face remains a ‘wicked’ issue.

The ‘cost of living crisis’ (the fall in ‘real’ disposable incomes that the UK has experienced since late 2021) is being caused predominantly by high inflation outstripping wage and benefit increases; this has worsened by recent tax increases.

The proposed move to reassess Council Tax bands made by UK Government could, if taken forward, add another pressure to citizens who are already having difficulties managing.

### Note:

Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.

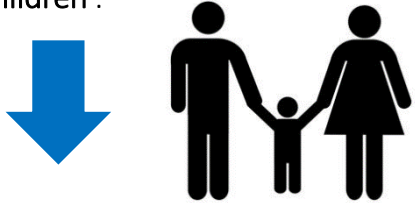
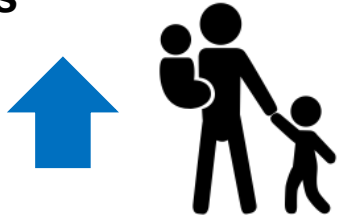
The impact of poverty and deprivation can be seen across a number of the themes within this document; and can only be addressed by services working together and with communities to develop collaborative solutions



# Single Households

## Key Data/Evidence shows

Household projections between 2018 and 2043 show that there will be an increase in 1 adult households with children.



Household projections between 2018 and 2043 show that there will be a reduction in 2 adult households with children.

There is also predicted to be an increase in 1 person households.

This will impact on the type of housing required to accommodate the changing needs of people in the area.



Demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties is set to rise

Demand for housing with more than 3 bedrooms is projected to fall



The likelihood of those who are single for various reasons living in the **10% most deprived areas** is higher than those who are living as a couple.

It may also impact on the number who need financial support with the increase in 1 adult with children households.



## Key Challenges Identified

Supporting single households with children in to work and provision of affordable childcare

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- There is likely to be a challenge in supporting those single households with children to continue in work or to gain employment due to child caring responsibilities. – **promotion of opportunities to secure afford, accessible childcare** will be a critical way to support people
- The data indicates that those who are disabled are wanting and willing to work but are not in employment – **focusing how we can connect people with opportunities** will be a great way to remove barriers
- Pilot **work trials are offered to people with a disability** so they can assess suitability for a particular role
- There is also likely to be an increase in the number of children receiving FSM for those in low-income families - **ensuring these families are advised of other sources of support open to them** (e.g.) school uniform grants etc.



# Soundscapes and Noise Pollution

## Key Data/Evidence shows

The National Survey of Wales undertook research which shows that, across Wales;

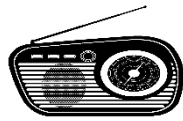
**27%**

of people were 'bothered' by noise.



There are 3 main types of noise pollution:

Domestic:



Commercial:



Industrial:



The principal underlying cause of noise pollution is road traffic; and Merthyr Tydfil has been identified as a "hot spot" in South Wales

Noise pollution can increase the risk of ill health, and poor quality of life; including raised stress levels; loss of sleep; mental fatigue etc.

## Key Challenges Identified

Noise is increasingly becoming a concern for people and their well-being

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Actively support the process where the country moves towards electric vehicles; and promotes what facilities are available within the County Borough to support this transfer

# Use of Natural Resources

## Key Data/Evidence shows

In Merthyr Tydfil, the amount of residential waste going to landfill sites is

**196kg**

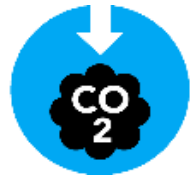


The percentage of waste being re-used; recycled or composted in Merthyr Tydfil is above the Welsh Government target at

**65%**

Tonnes of emissions avoided in Merthyr Tydfil

**8 tonnes**



The number of Priority Open Spaces (out of 23 Priority Open Spaces) that meet or exceed the quality standard: **Healthy, Safe and Secure in Merthyr Tydfil** continues to increase.



2018/19 -	<b>8</b>
2019/20 -	<b>9</b>
2020/21 -	<b>9</b>
2021/22 -	<b>11</b>



## Key Challenges Identified

To make better use of our natural resources and develop a regenerative economy

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- We must **decarbonise our energy system** in a way which improves wellbeing in Wales. We must **use energy more efficiently, reduce emissions from fossil fuel generation and increase generation from renewable and low carbon sources.**
- We will need more renewable energy generation if we are to meet the increased electricity demand resulting from decarbonising heat and transport Continue to work towards achieving the Welsh Government **recycling targets**
- Assess opportunities for collaborative work around **reuse and repair shops**



# Wildfires

## Key Data/Evidence shows



Between 2018 and 2020; **over a half** of the **deliberate wildfires** tended by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service were in Merthyr Tydfil and RCT.

**264/418 (63%)**

The level of deliberate grassland, woodland and crop fires in Merthyr Tydfil in recent years **had placed significant pressure on public services**; this can be seen to have improved over the last 2 years

2017/18 - **69**  
2018/19 - **152**  
2019/20 - **64**  
2020/21 - **74**

Doubled in  
12 months



The financial implications of wildfires can be devastating ; especially where the victims have little or no insurance.

There can also be an impact on tourism.

The impact of wildfires are many and complex; and include:



Risk to  
life



Loss of  
wildlife



Destruction  
of habitat



Damage/  
loss of  
property



Impact on  
air quality

## Key Challenges Identified

Wildfires are having an increasing impact on the area environmentally; and can add to the challenges faced around decarbonisation

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- **Effectively manage Council land and estates** so that material is not as freely available as a fuel source or as a run-off would be a preventative measure as well as supporting habitat improvement and biodiversity.

# Water Health

## Key Data/Evidence shows

The importance of clean rivers for people is recognised as it supports a significant number of outdoor activities ranging from angling to boating and general recreation.



As Merthyr Tydfil continues to develop as a tourism destination; **having good water health is critically important** and is closely linked to the local economy.

There are close links between water quality and human wellbeing. Although there has been a period of recovery from the area's industrial past which has seen an improvement in water health, new sources of pollutants from a growing urbanisation have occurred.



Micro-plastics have been found within the water environment in the Taff catchment showing that plastics have been transferred from prey to predator and adult to offspring.

Water pollution can come from other sources; the highest of these being sewage being discharged into water course. The number of water pollution accidents in Merthyr Tydfil in 2019 (verified by Natural Resources Wales)

**15**  
instances

## Key Challenges Identified

Improving the quality of our rivers is important for people and for making nature more resilient

There is growing awareness of how issues such as the increase in micro-plastics found in water can have a detrimental effect on health for both people and animals

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- The reasons for not achieving Good Ecological Status are due to low fish and invertebrate populations. – by **monitoring and assessing our water ways** we can undertake preventative work in relation to this; or be able to undertake earlier intervention should an issue occur
- Within the CTM area, between 2016 and 2020, Merthyr Tydfil had 15 of environmental pollution incidents. The Council should take action to **hold identified polluters to account**
- **Actively promote the reduction of single use plastics** across the County Borough; working with local businesses to re-enforce this key action

# Youth Offending

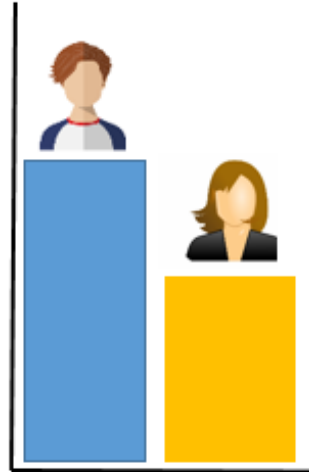
## Key Data/Evidence shows

Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (YOS) provide the support to young offenders and those on the periphery of offending. Data is limited due to the impact of Covid on service delivery

Most offenders in the area are males; with a lower number of females receiving support

Most offenders in the area are aged between

**15 and  
17 years**



Primary partners supporting Cwm Taf YOS include:



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
University Health Board



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
County Borough Council



South Wales  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
Comisynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddu  
De Cymru

## Key Challenges Identified

Maintaining the interventions that are providing positive outcomes for young people and their families.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Multi agency support for those experiencing difficulties in education, particularly those with additional learning needs would be beneficial. This work reflects the requirements of the Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales in the promotion of children receiving targeted preventative youth justice services at the earliest point, in order to avoid further offending behaviour/convictions.
- There are opportunities for **community engagement with young people to understand their needs and to ensure they feel their needs are met** and that they are not 'blamed' for anti-social behaviour as a result of meeting up with friends.

# Volunteering

## Key Data/Evidence shows

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil is the CVC for the Merthyr Tydfil area; and works closely with Interlink in RCT.

The number of volunteer placements undertaking by VAMT's Volunteer Bureau shows the following data:

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
162	152	No Data	97

Volunteer activities included:



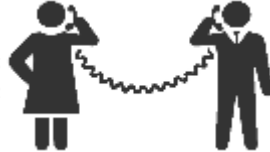
Dog walking



Prescription collection



Shopping



Befriending calls

Third sector organisations and the volunteers played a **critical role in managing the impact of the pandemic**; and there continue to be opportunities for collaborative working, especially when connecting with communities.

## Key Challenges Identified

Managing the reduction in volunteer numbers following the pandemic.

## Gaps (Opportunities for Improving Support)

- Consider re-introducing the local COMPACT agreements with Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil to underpin the current collaborative work undertaken
- Consider how the Council could offer volunteering opportunities



# Key Strategies and Plans

## Corporate Well-being Plan

