

Homewards Newport



Newport Women's Homelessness Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

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In partnership with



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Images: Front cover, pages 6 and 22 – Centre for Homelessness Impact /Liam McBurney/PA

Page 3 – Centre for Homelessness Impact / Jeff Hubbard

Page 30 and back cover – Aaron Chown/PA Wire/Centre for Homelessness Impact

Page 14 – Newport City Council

In a Nutshell



The Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high-level action plan 2021-2026 (Welsh Government, 2021) emphasises the importance of early intervention and prevention in addressing women's homelessness. This includes, **identifying women at risk, working with domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation services, healthcare providers, and social services to identify women who are at risk of becoming homeless and offering support before they reach crisis point.**

Developing tailored homelessness prevention strategies specifically designed to support all women, including those with children, those fleeing domestic violence, women exploited by the sex industry, and those who are victims of other forms of violence against women and girls.

Our focus is to create **safe, gender-sensitive services** that understand and respond to these specific needs. It's not just about providing temporary accommodation we need more **projects developed and commissioned specifically for women**, taking an integrated

approach offering support that helps women heal, rebuild, and regain stability in their lives. Lived experience is vitally important. We are privileged that homeless women have shared their experiences which we have shared throughout this report; we respect that they wanted to remain anonymous.

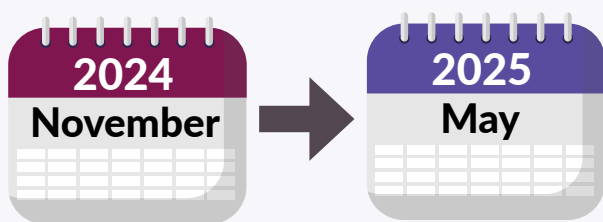
To truly make a difference in Newport we need to work together end homelessness by focusing on prevention, giving women the support they need before they reach crisis point.



"Although people don't realise the great impact of small gestures and micro actions, we are often put off taking action as we deem it to be insignificant or of low impact which is not true. Even a smile had the capacity to reach me back then."

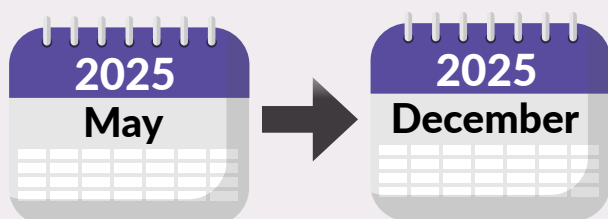
To do this we will

Immediately (November 2024 – May 2025)



- Trial implementation period of an early intervention worker within Cyfannol Women's Aid to establish the individual needs of women experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, to understand impact. [4]
- Develop and pilot a Women's Homelessness Census across Newport to assess several key factors critical to understanding and addressing homelessness among women and children.
- Begin a campaign to support changing the perception of women who are homeless. The 'Women of Newport' art exhibition will be the first campaign.
- Establish overnight accommodation and support services for women, offering a safe haven during challenging times.
- Work with Welsh Government to demonstrate that women's refuges need to be removed from the Renting Homes Act (2016).
- Develop work with **Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO)** to understand need and impact of services for ethnically diverse women in Newport.
- Develop an understanding of women's homelessness, through the development of gender specific data and intelligence. This will allow partner organisation such as social services, housing, police and charities to track outcomes and contribute to improving support for those in need.

In the medium term (May 2025 – December 2025)



- Conduct the Homelessness Census across Newport to gain a clear understanding of the breadth and severity of homelessness among women and the risk factors which lead to homelessness.
- Change the perception of women who are homeless through 'Walk in my shoes'; an activity that provides the opportunity to gain a broader perspective of what homeless women experience and how it feels to be homeless and understand the human stories.
- Further develop 'Women's Housing First' model with Pobl and Newport City Council with wraparound services supported by health and specialist services.
- All partner organisations to self-assess against the Welsh Government trauma-informed framework and develop a training action plan to embed trauma-informed practice into every day working.

In the long term (December 2025 onwards)



- Target early intervention: Identify women at risk of homelessness, such as those facing eviction, relationship breakdowns, or domestic abuse and sexual violence, and offer preventive services (e.g. housing advice, financial support or legal aid).
- Repeat census – measure impact and emerging or changing need.
- Understand and address how services can be tailored in a way that adapts to the needs of all women, including women from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with disabilities, or LGBTQ+ that face greater discrimination.
- Provide safe accommodation to women leaving prison and protect them from returning to an environment which could lead them back to previous harm and increase the risk of reoffending. The current provision of hostels does not support a trauma-informed approach to reintegration.
- Provide more safe accommodation to those women who are sexually exploited using the principles of the existing models, commissioned by Newport City Council, of Cyfannol Women's Aid (Arcadia House) and Pobl - Complex Needs Supported Accommodation (Albert Street).
- Develop an integrated commissioning framework that delivers comprehensive, wraparound services to address women's homelessness, tailored to meet the diverse needs of women with children, those fleeing domestic violence, women exploited by the sex industry, and victims of other forms of gender-based violence.

As partner organisations we recognise the **importance of working collaboratively** across Newport, we also recognise the significant challenge of homelessness in our local area. We know the inequalities which have led to this situation and the inequity that women face.

The data around women's homelessness is stark and serves as a powerful **call to action**. This is amplified by the work we have been doing in partnership, working with women living without a roof, their personal stories, their fears, for some a lifetime of vulnerability and trauma, makes this our collective imperative, to identify the root causes and harms and work towards ending homelessness for this generation and the ones to come.

Let us commit to making a difference in Newport, to achieve every woman having a safe place to call home, access to the resources she needs, and the opportunity to build a better future.

Chapter One: Background, Purpose, Scope and Impact



Background

Homewards [1] is a transformative five-year programme launched by Prince William and The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales, with the aim to demonstrate that it is possible to end homelessness, making it rare, brief and unrepeatable. Over the next five years, Homewards is working with six flagship locations, including Newport, and giving them the space, tools and expertise they need to put in place innovative, collaborative, and sustainable solutions that could help put Newport on a path towards ending homelessness.

As part of Homewards' work with Newport, they have formed a coalition of committed businesses and organisations who have come together to create a local action plan that outlines how Newport will embark on a journey to end homelessness.

The local action plan details the key areas where Newport will lay new groundwork for prevention. The initiative focuses on working with local communities and organisations to address the root causes of homelessness, and which initial groups of people they aim to support, including women.

We have set up working groups which aim to build on existing collaborative working and best practice in Newport to improve how the system responds

in key areas including prevention, families, women and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). In the women's group, we are currently focused on women experiencing multiple disadvantages and domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual exploitation that can lead to homelessness, and are working together to better understand their needs which will inform development of future services. Women experiencing homelessness are at higher risk of physical and sexual violence. This makes the provision of safe, gender-specific accommodation a priority to protect women from further harm. The accommodation must meet the needs of disabled women, older women, and LGBTQ+ women who have other additional needs/additional experiences of socially vulnerable women.

Why are we doing this



"I just need help, but I don't think anyone can. Nothing changes - all the homeless are the same, I think I will die homeless"

The **Women's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment** (JSNA) in Newport, South Wales, supported by Homewards Newport, is part of a broader effort to address the specific challenges faced by women in this region. Understanding the background and context of this initiative requires looking at both the general role of JSNAs in public health and the particular focus of Homewards Newport, along with the unique socio-economic context of Newport.

A JSNA looks at the current and future health needs of local populations to inform and guide local authorities and health services in planning and commissioning integrated services to improve the health and well-being of their communities. This assessment helps identify disparities and gaps in service provision, guiding targeted interventions in relation to women's homelessness, and focuses on the vulnerabilities of women who are unable to leave risky situations because the housing choices available to them do not sufficiently meet levels of demand or diversity of needs. This report does not cover the impact

of homelessness on children and the best start in life. The Homewards Newport's Families Working group is focused on this issue and finding ways to ensuring that no child is harmed by homelessness in Newport in the future.

Newport, like many post-industrial areas in South Wales, faces significant socio-economic challenges, including high levels of poverty, unemployment, and social deprivation. These factors contribute to various health and well-being issues, with women often being disproportionately affected. Additionally, the region has seen rising concerns related to housing insecurity and homelessness, particularly among vulnerable groups.

Gwent is now a Marmot region. This focuses on systemic understanding and adjustments to the way care and services are provided to account for an individual's social needs and to reduce barriers to accessing high quality care and services that vulnerable groups often face. It identifies the need to improve collaboration between the NHS, local government and other sectors to improve social conditions for the local population and ensure a healthy standard of living for all. It recognises that efforts should be made by health and social care providers to ensure equitable access to their services.

The eight Marmot policy objectives:



Give every child the best start in life



Enable all children young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives



Create fair employment and good work for all



Ensure healthy standard of living for all



Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities



Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention



Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.



Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.

Purpose

Conducting a Women's JSNA in Newport is strategically important due to the city's specific demographic and socio-economic challenges. By focusing on women's needs, the assessment can help local authorities and partner organisations develop targeted strategies to improve the quality of life for women, reduce inequalities, and address issues like domestic abuse and sexual violence, access to healthcare, and housing insecurity.

Women experiencing homelessness face unique and deeply personal challenges that require a focused approach. Domestic abuse is a leading cause, forcing many women to leave their homes in search of safety, often with nowhere to turn [2].

Once homeless, they are at greater risk of violence, exploitation, and trauma. Many carry the burden of mental health struggles, substance abuse, and past trauma, making it harder to escape the cycle of instability [3].

For women from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with disabilities, or LGBTQ+ individuals, the challenges are even greater, as they face additional discrimination and lack of targeted support. Many women are also mothers, making the search for safe, stable housing even more urgent [4].

Scope

- **Health and Well-being** - Assessing access to, and the quality of, health services for women, including maternal health and safeguarding, reproductive health, mental health services, parental support, and support for conditions disproportionately affecting women.
- **Housing and Homelessness** - Identifying the scale and drivers of homelessness among women, including domestic violence, and developing interventions to provide safe and secure housing options.
- **Employment and Economic Inclusion** - Analysing barriers to employment for women, such as childcare responsibilities, wage gaps, and discrimination, and proposing strategies to improve economic opportunities.
- **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence** - Reviewing the prevalence of domestic abuse and the effectiveness of existing support services, with the aim of enhancing protection and support for women at risk.

Impact

The findings from the Women's JSNA in Newport will inform the development of local strategies and action plans to address the specific needs of women, particularly in relation to health, safety, and housing.

Homewards Newport's involvement highlights the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, bringing together local authorities, healthcare providers, charities, and community organisations to tackle complex issues like homelessness in a comprehensive manner.

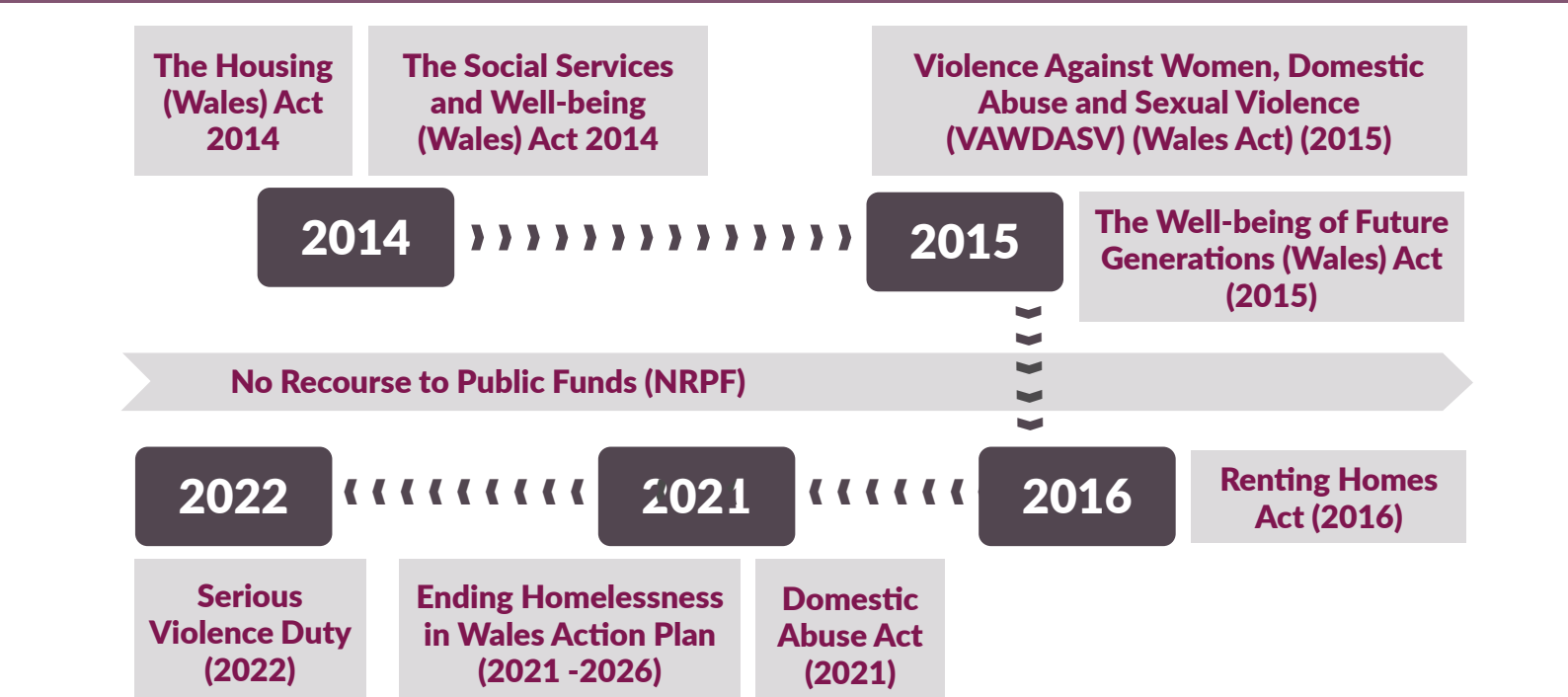
By focusing on women's needs, the JSNA also plays a crucial role in advocating for when gender-sensitive policies are needed and ensuring that women's voices are heard in local decision-making processes.

In summary, the Women's JSNA in Newport, supported by Homewards Newport, represents a significant effort to address the issues of gender and associated inequities in health, and homelessness in a vulnerable community. It is a key tool in supporting action planning in shaping effective local policies and interventions to inform how we can improve the lives of women in Newport.

Chapter Two: National Context

A group of six diverse young people are standing in front of a row of colorful, modern houses. One person in the center is holding up a large sign featuring the Welsh flag, which depicts a red dragon on a green and white background. The group consists of three women and three men of various ethnicities. The background shows a row of houses with different colored facades (red, green, yellow, blue) and a river in the distance. The sky is overcast.

This document explores the **national context** affecting women who experience homelessness, focusing on the impact of various Welsh housing and domestic abuse legislation, particularly the Housing (Wales) Act 2014; Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015; and Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high-level action plan, 2021–2026; and their role in addressing homelessness and supporting vulnerable women. It highlights the legal frameworks, challenges, and the need for better collaboration and gender-sensitive approaches to effectively tackle these issues.



The Housing (Wales) Act 2014

The **Housing (Wales) Act 2014** was introduced with the aim of addressing various issues related to housing in Wales. It aimed to improve the quality, accessibility, and management of housing, as well as tackle homelessness. The Act introduced several key reforms, including

Key Aspects:

Preventive Approach: Aims to reduce homelessness by enhancing prevention efforts and offering better support and advice.

Multi-Agency Cooperation: Emphasises collaboration across services to support vulnerable individuals, including women.

Diverse Experiences of Women: Acknowledges how factors like race, age, disability, gender identity, immigration status, and sexual orientation affect women's homelessness.

Domestic Abuse: Recognises domestic abuse as a significant cause of homelessness among women.

Section 70 makes domestic violence a priority for homelessness assistance, and **Section 80** prevents local authorities from referring women fleeing abuse to another authority where they are at risk.

Offender Challenges: Highlights housing instability for women with a history of offending, especially due to the lack of women's prisons in Wales.

Minority Women: Recognises the specific challenges faced by women from minority ethnic backgrounds, women with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ women, necessitating tailored support.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** provides a framework for supporting vulnerable individuals, including those at risk of homelessness or domestic abuse.

Key Aspects

Prevention and Early Intervention: Emphasises identifying at-risk individuals early and providing tailored support.

Person-Centred Approach: Ensures that support plans reflect individuals' unique needs and preferences.

Collaboration: Encourages partnerships between housing, social services, health, and voluntary organisations to offer comprehensive care.

Rights and Advocacy: Ensures that individuals, especially domestic abuse survivors, have access to advocacy and support services.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales Act) (2015)

The **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015** aims to improve the public sector response to gender-based violence, domestic abuse, and sexual violence.

Key Aspects:

Public Sector Duty: Requires local authorities and health boards to prepare strategies for prevention, protection, and support.

Guidance and Training: Provides statutory guidance for responding to gender-based violence, including staff training and information sharing.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** promotes long-term sustainability by requiring public bodies to consider the economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts of their decisions. It encourages a holistic, forward-thinking approach to ensure the well-being of both current and future generations

Key Aspects:

Holistic Approach: Requires public bodies to consider economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being in decision-making.

Impact on Homelessness: Shifts the focus from crisis management to root cause prevention, aiming to sustainably address homelessness.

Renting Homes (Wales) Act (2016)

The **Renting Homes (Wales) Act** was introduced in **2016** and amended in **2021 (Amendment) (Wales) Act 2021**. It reformed housing law in Wales to enhance tenant rights and improve property standards.

Key Aspects:

Tenant Protections: Includes rights around joint contracts, notice periods, evictions, and standards for fitness for habitation.

Impact on VAWDASV Services: Complicated contract processes and administrative burdens have created challenges for the violence against women sector, limiting available refuge spaces for women fleeing abuse.

Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high-level action plan (2021-2026)

The **Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high-level action plan (2021-2026)** objective is to achieve homelessness prevention, with specific focus on women's needs.

Key Aspects:

Trauma-Informed Support: Prioritises safe, supportive services for women fleeing domestic abuse.

Collaboration: Emphasises collaboration between homelessness and domestic violence services to ensure women receive necessary care.

Domestic Abuse Act (2021)

The **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** strengthens protections for domestic abuse victims and holds perpetrators accountable. The Act also covers economic abuse, criminalises threats to share intimate images, and expands protections for survivors in legal and housing contexts. However, some provisions apply only in England.

Key Aspects:

Expanded Definition: Domestic abuse now includes emotional, economic, physical, and controlling behaviours. Children exposed to abuse are also recognised as victims.

Protection Orders: New Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) restrict abusers and provide immediate protection.

Safe Accommodation Duty: Local authorities must provide safe housing for victims. (England only)

Court Protections: Abusers are barred from cross-examining victims in family court, and victims get special measures like video testimony.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner: An independent role to monitor and improve the national response to domestic abuse.

Migrant Victim Support: Temporary help is provided for migrant survivors with restricted access to public funds.

Serious Violence Duty (2022)

The **Serious Violence Duty (2022)** is a legislative framework in England and Wales aimed at addressing the increase in serious violence.

Multi-Agency Collaboration: Requires local authorities, police, health services, and education providers to work together to understand and combat serious violence.

Prevention and Early Intervention: Emphasises proactive strategies to prevent violence, focusing on early interventions for at-risk individuals.

Evidence-Based Strategies: Mandates the use of data and research to inform actions and tailor responses to local needs.

Flexibility for Local Partnerships: Allows local organisations to customize their approaches based on specific community challenges.

Community Engagement: Encourages involvement from community members to better understand their experiences and concerns.

Accountability: Agencies must report on their efforts to address serious violence, ensuring transparency and effectiveness.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is a condition that prevents people from accessing state-funded benefits, tax credits and housing assistance for individuals with specific immigration statuses.

Key Aspect

Homelessness Assistance: Those subject to NRPF conditions cannot access local authority housing, but Social Services may assess and support individuals fleeing domestic abuse under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Summary

The **Housing (Wales) Act 2014** reforms homelessness legislation by expanding support, recognising the unique challenges faced by women, especially those fleeing domestic abuse or with a history of offending. It emphasises the need for multi-agency cooperation to improve prevention and support. Complementary laws like the **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Act 2015** and the **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015** also promote long-term solutions. This includes the **Serious Violence Duty (2022)** legislative framework aimed at promoting a coordinated and preventive approach to reduce serious violence and enhance community safety.

In Newport, the impact of these national policies is particularly significant. We are legislation rich which encourages collaboration between partners, prevention and has a strong focus on protection of women. Homewards has been successful at convening a space for collaboration to make meaningful change. However, issues with **understanding demand, lack of gender-specific data and inadequate funding** hinder effective implementation. This highlights the urgent need for both prevention and crisis management strategies tailored to the unique circumstances faced by women in our community.

Chapter Three: Local Context



Newport

Newport is a city in South Wales, located on the River Usk, about 12 miles northeast of Cardiff. It has a rich history and a thriving industry, known for its cultural significance. Historically a coal-exporting city, Newport's economy has diversified into sectors like high-tech, electronics, and financial services.

The city has undergone significant regeneration, with new shopping areas and improved transport links, positioning itself as an affordable alternative to Cardiff and Bristol for both living and business. These modern developments have pushed house prices up. Newport, like many other post-industrial cities in the UK, faces issues of deprivation in certain areas despite recent efforts at regeneration and economic growth. While parts of the city have seen significant development, other neighbourhoods continue to struggle with poverty, unemployment, and social challenges. The economic imbalance, particularly after the collapse of coal mining and steel production, is one of the key drivers of deprivation in the city.



Newport has 95 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which are small geographic areas used in the UK for collecting and reporting local statistics, like population or health data, to help understand local communities.

One of these Newport LSOAs, 'Pillgwenlly 4', is the 10th most deprived area in the whole of Wales. In addition, almost a quarter of LSOAs in Newport (23 LSOAs) are in the 10% most deprived areas of Wales.

Housing deprivation in Gwent is clustered around Newport city centre. Of the top 10% of LSOAs in Wales that have the highest rate of housing deprivation, 12 of these LSOAs are in Newport.

Health outcomes in deprived areas of Newport are often worse than in more affluent parts of the city. There are significant disparities in life expectancy, with people in poorer areas more likely to suffer from chronic illnesses and mental health issues earlier in life.

Housing in some deprived areas of Newport is an issue, with a lack of affordable options contributing to social problems. Homelessness has also been an ongoing concern, especially in urban areas. Projects to improve social housing and build new affordable homes are ongoing, although there is still a shortage of quality housing in many deprived neighbourhoods.



Newport has made significant strides in regenerating its economy and infrastructure, however, pockets of deprivation remain a serious issue, particularly in areas that were heavily reliant on traditional industries. The city is undergoing change, but the benefits of regeneration have not been felt equally across all communities. Economic disparities, housing, education, and health issues continue to affect the most deprived parts of Newport, requiring continued investment and targeted support to improve living standards and opportunities for all residents. This is particularly critical that we focus and recognise the gender approach to homelessness and those at risk of homelessness.



Profile of Newport

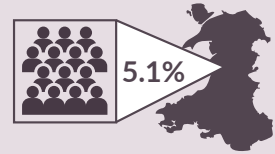
General information

(2021⁶ Census or Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019⁷)

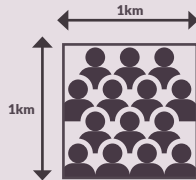
Population
159,587



% of the Wales
Population
5.1%



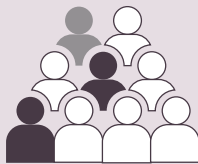
Population Density
(population per km²)
838



Area (km²)
217



% of people who
identified as non-White
14.5%



% of the population
are Female
50.9%



% of people are
aged 65 and over
17.0%



% of the population
aged 16+ are LGBTQ+
2.88%



% of people aged 16+
have no qualifications
21.7%



% of people aged 16+
are economically inactive
2.88%



WIMD 2019 –
Overall % of LSOAs in
most deprived 10%
24.2%



WIMD 2019 –
Community Safety
Domain (% of LSOAs
in most deprived 10%)
35.8%

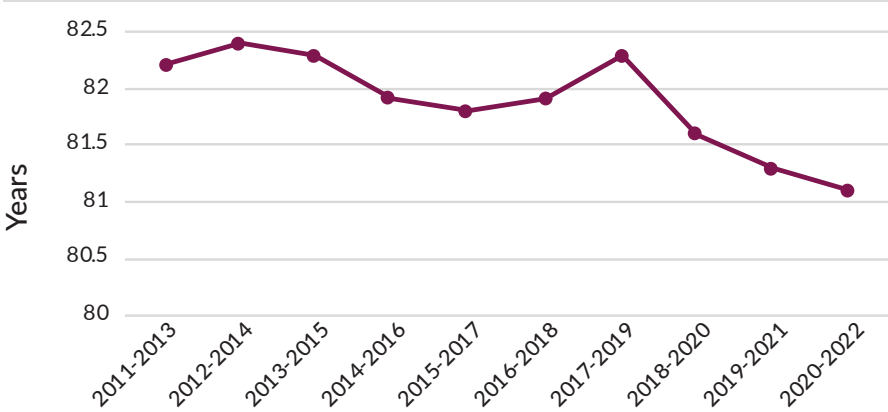


The link between healthy life expectancy and women's homelessness is multifaceted. Women experiencing homelessness often face significant health challenges, including higher rates of chronic illnesses, mental health issues, and substance abuse. These factors can negatively impact their life expectancy and their healthy life years. Homeless women frequently have limited access to healthcare services, which exacerbates existing health issues and leads to a lower overall life expectancy. Homeless women in Newport do have access to the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Health Inclusion Team. This is a small, dedicated nurse-led team which has two mental health nurses, one general nurse and three health care support workers for the whole of Gwent. Many homeless women have histories of trauma and violence, including domestic abuse and sexual violence, which can lead to both

physical and mental health problems. This trauma can shorten healthy life expectancy and impact on healthy life years. Access to nutritious food is often limited for homeless individuals. Poor nutrition can lead to a range of health issues, further impacting life expectancy. The stress of homelessness can contribute to mental health conditions, which in turn can affect physical health and longevity.

Addressing these interconnected issues requires comprehensive policies that improve housing stability, access to healthcare, and support services for women facing homelessness. The [Gwent Joint Strategic Assessment - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the health and well-being of the people of Gwent and demonstrates the following as a picture in Newport.

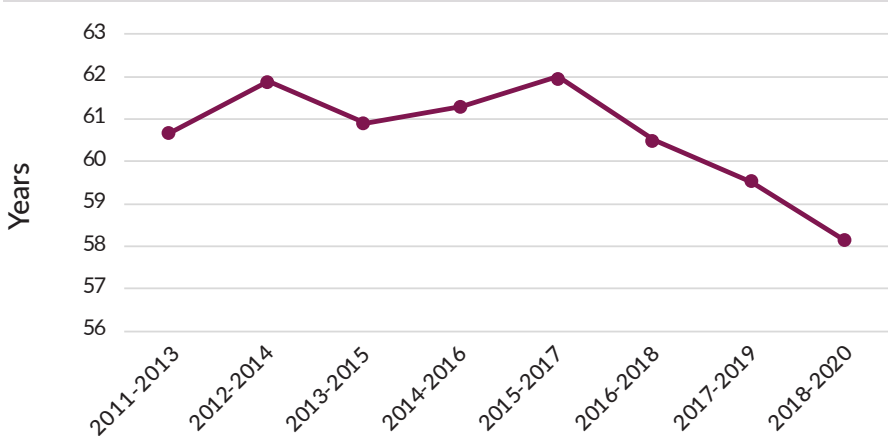
Graph 1: Female Life Expectancy



Source: Public Health Wales

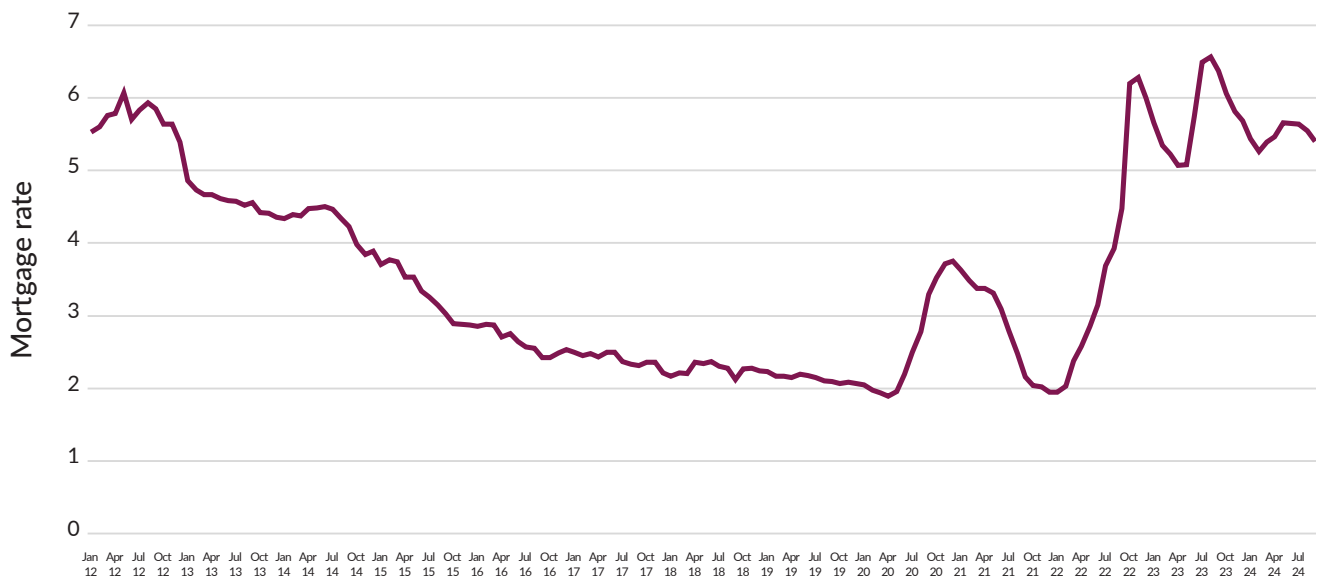
Female life expectancy at birth in Newport was broadly flat from 2011/13 to 2017/19 but has been slowly declining since.

Graph 2: Female Healthy Life Years



Source: Public Health Wales

Female healthy life expectancy in Newport peaked during 2015-2017 at 62 years, but has been declining since.

Graph 3: 90% Loan to Value 2 Year Fixed Mortgage Rate

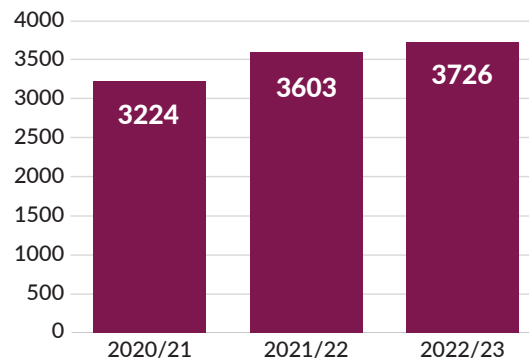
Source: Bank of England

Graph 3 demonstrates the impact of increased mortgage rates on those in existing housing and those trying to get on the housing ladder. This increase in interest rates has also had an impact on the affordability of rented accommodation, with rents being higher or the buy-to-let market shrinking. For many low-income households, purchasing a house is currently unaffordable - single applicants have to spend up to 7.6 times their salary [5].



The numbers of people approaching Newport City Council for housing advice has increased over the last three years, demonstrating increased need and placing more pressure on services.

Graph 4: Approaches for advice and guidance on housing



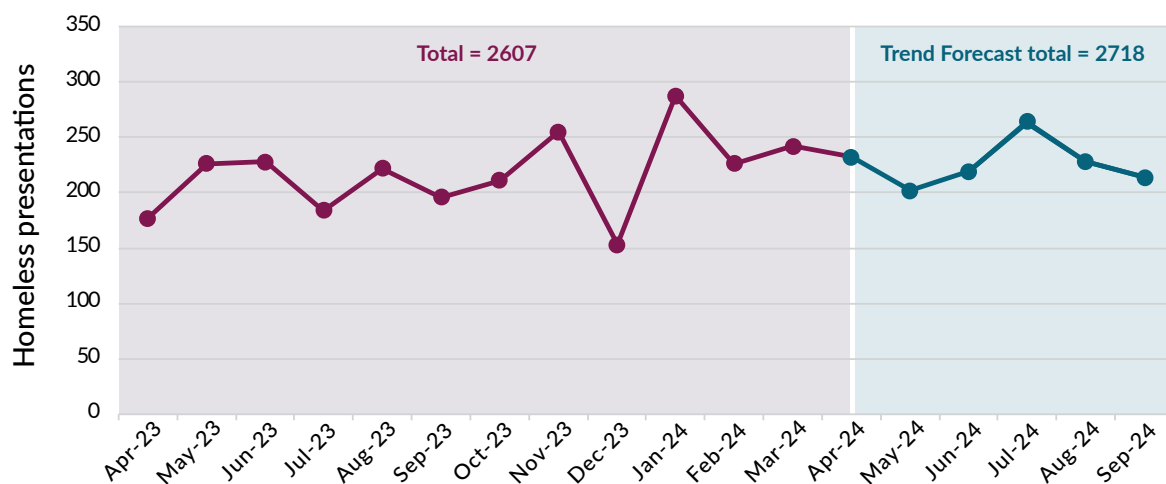
Source: Newport City Council

Graph 4 demonstrates the rise of support applications for housing over the last three years, via the gateway service run by Newport City Council.

Graph 5: Total and trend forecast homeless presentations

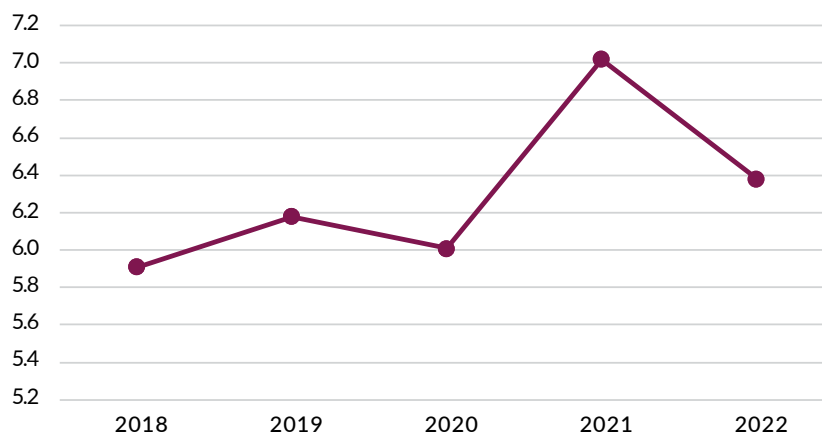
Total homeless presentations Apr 23 to Mar 24 = 2607

Homeless presentations trend forecast Apr 24 to Sep 24 = 2718



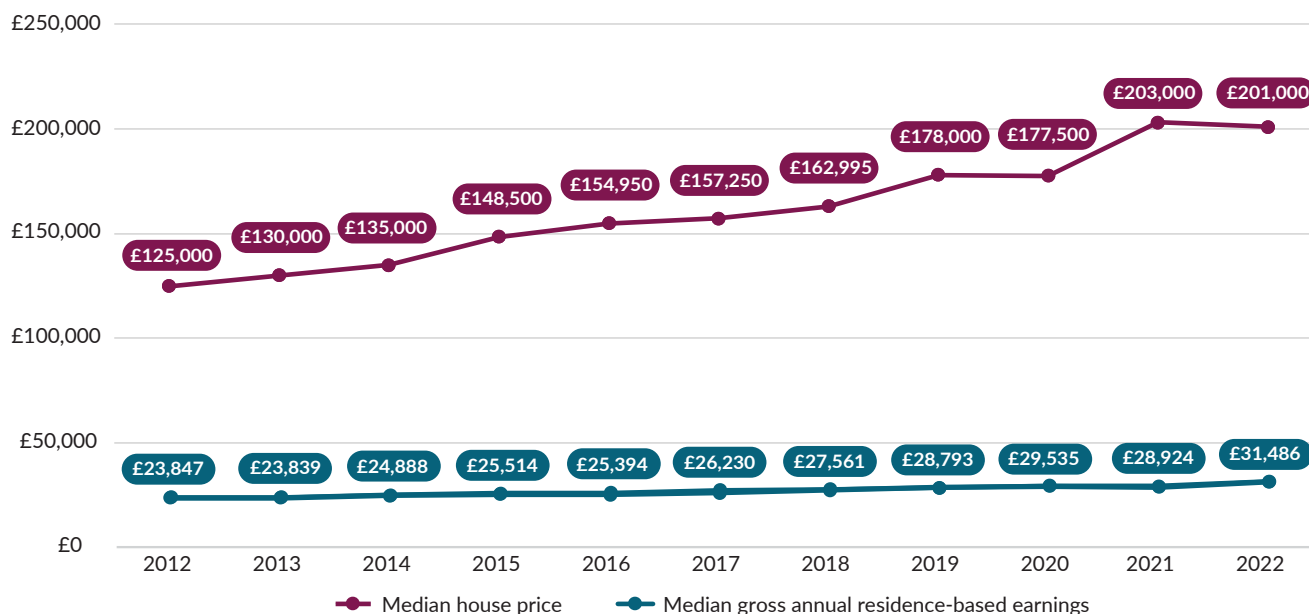
Source: Newport City Council

Graph 5 shows the data over the last 18 months for households that have approached Newport City Council for advice relating to homelessness over the last year. This data is not currently split by gender but demonstrates that if the predicted trend forecast happens, homeless presentations will have increased by 4.3% from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

Graph 6: Ratio of median house price to median gross annual based earnings in Newport 2018-2022

Source: Office of National Statistics

In 2022, the ratio of median house price to median gross annual based earnings for Newport was the second highest local authority in Gwent at 6.4. From 2020 to 2021, housing became much less affordable due to an increase in house prices whilst earnings remained the same. From 2021 to 2022, house prices were flat whilst earnings increased, making housing slightly more affordable than the previous year, but still less affordable than before 2021.

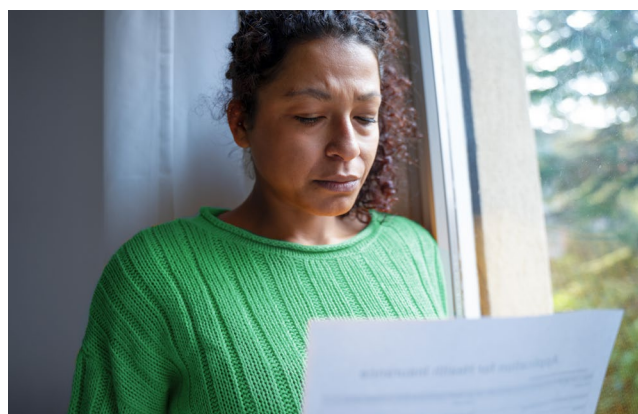
Graph 7: Median house price to median gross annual based earnings in Newport, 2012- 2022

Source: Office of National Statistics

From 2021 to 2022, house prices in Newport fell slightly whilst earnings increased, making housing slightly more affordable than the previous year, but still less affordable than before 2021. This illustrates the challenge of people trying to buy a home.

Newport - Scale of the challenge

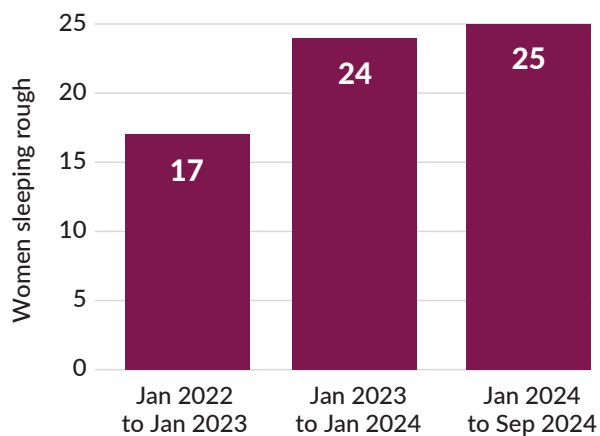
Homelessness in Newport, like in many areas, is caused by a complex mix of personal, social, and structural factors. Understanding the root causes of women's homelessness in Newport is essential to tackling the issue. In 2022 the Housing Support Strategy highlighted the following [6]



- Homelessness presentations in Newport have remained consistently around 1,900 per year for the past three years.
- The number of single people presenting as homeless has notably increased during the pandemic from 62% to 70%, supporting the need for local authorities to provide assistance to households and individuals that would not have previously been considered a priority need.
- The homelessness prevention rates have reduced from 49% pre-pandemic to 42%, but the number of prevention cases has also dropped by 50% during 2020/21, reflecting the temporary Covid legislation preventing eviction, increasing notice periods and reducing opportunities to mediate and retain accommodation with family or friends.
- Despite similar actual number of cases, homelessness relief rates and positive outcomes have reduced from approximately 26% to 20% and 74% to 63% due to lack of affordable, move on accommodation during the pandemic.
- The waiting list for affordable housing stands at over 8,000 as of November 2021 with an average of 300 applications received per month.
- The average number of bids received per property advertised for 2021/22 is in excess of 230, which has increased from 166 in 2019/20.
- The number of social housing tenancies granted via the Common Housing Register reduced during 2020/21 from approximately 1,000 to 751, with an average of 47% of allocations to homeless households.
- Since March 2020, the number of households placed into temporary accommodation has increased from 238 to 385 as of October 2021. Approximately 32% of those accommodated are being accommodated due to Welsh Government guidance only, not within Housing Wales Act 2014 legislation.
- Temporary accommodation placements average 96 per month; move on numbers from temporary accommodation remain at an average of 16 households per month.
- **Women experiencing homelessness are at higher risk of physical and sexual violence. This makes the provision of safe, gender-specific accommodation a priority to protect women from further harm.**

"Nobody cares about us... The only ones who really care are you guys. Imagine people thinking your scum... cuz that's what people think of us"



Graph 8: Women sleeping rough in Newport

This number does not take account of those women that may not recognise themselves as homeless as they are sofa-surfing or being sexually exploited in exchange for somewhere to sleep or those at risk of homelessness and stay in highly vulnerable situations to have a roof over their heads. There is little data collected in this area therefore it is difficult to measure the impact.

Further work is needed to understand the impact of homelessness and risk of homelessness on specific needs of homeless women. There is a concerning and gradual increase in the number of women over sixty-five experiencing domestic abuse and rough sleeping. Current rough sleeping statistics do not capture the true extent of the issue; this report will highlight the vulnerabilities faced by women who remain in precarious situations due to a lack of alternative housing options. Understanding these numbers is crucial for addressing the needs of those at risk.

Risks Faced by Women in Temporary Accommodation

Temporary accommodation refers to short-term housing provided for individuals or families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This type of accommodation is often arranged by local authorities. Temporary accommodation can include hostels, bed-and-breakfast establishments and shared housing, which those facing homelessness can apply for support. The duration of temporary accommodation is meant to be short-term, however due to the lack of available rental properties and social housing, people find themselves in temporary accommodation long-term. The latest published Newport City Council data (January – March 2024) states that there are 534 people in temporary accommodation; of those, 24 were in refuges and 342 people in bed and breakfast. The data is not broken down by gender at a national level [7].

Women in temporary accommodation face several risks that can impact their safety, health, and well-being. Women may be at increased risk of violence or harassment, both from other residents and external individuals. This can include domestic abuse, sexual assault, or exploitation.

Impact on Mental Health

The stress of unstable housing can exacerbate mental health issues, leading to anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly for those with prior trauma. Temporary accommodations often have shared living spaces, which can lead to a lack of privacy and personal space, increasing stress and feelings of insecurity.

Insufficient Support Services

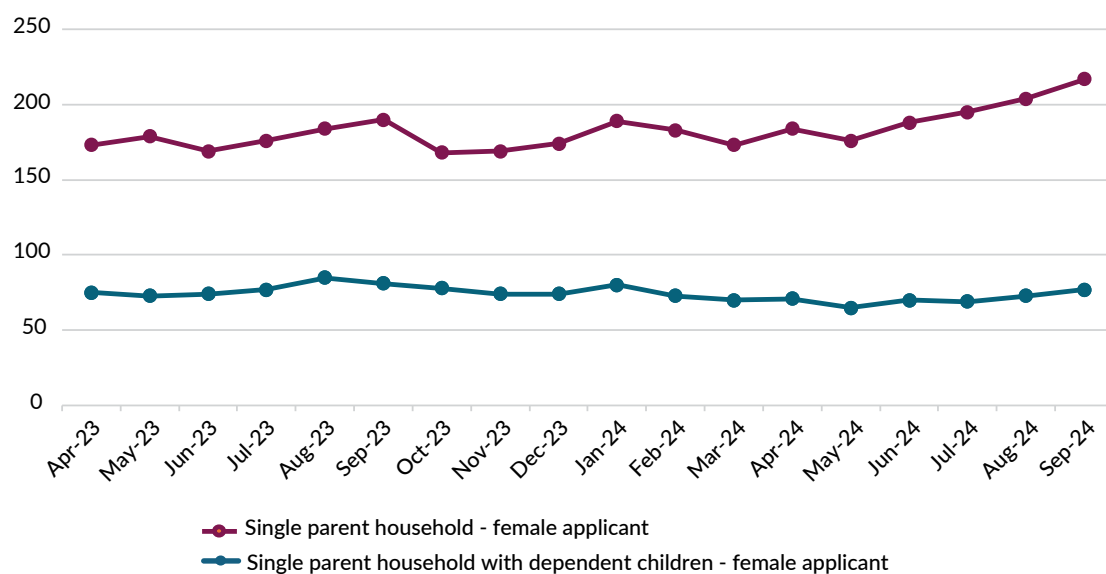
Not all temporary accommodations provide sufficient support, such as mental health services, job training, or access to healthcare, making it difficult for women to transition to stable housing. Some women may turn to substance use as a coping mechanism for the challenges they face, which can lead to further health problems and instability and often lead to them being asked to leave the accommodation. As with refugees there are preconditions of living arrangements which makes it incredibly difficult for many women with addiction issues to keep temporary accommodation.



Challenges for Women with Children

For those women with children, temporary accommodation can complicate parenting, with limited resources and safe spaces for children to play or learn and to cook healthy meals.

Graph 9: Number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the month, Apr 23 to Sep 24*



Source Newport City Council *This does not include women that are part of a couple

Graph 9 includes 18 months of data from Newport City Council, depicting the number of female single-parent household applicants and female applicants that are single. Single male applicants are higher in number in temporary accommodation. In the 18 months from April 2023 to September 2024, there were on average 182 single females in temporary accommodation which was only 17% below the average number of single males in temporary accommodation (219 men). On average, 60% of these 182 single females in temporary accommodation were single females with children.

Overall, temporary accommodation plays a crucial role in addressing homelessness, but it highlights the need for more sustainable housing solutions.

Social Economic Environment

Women are more likely to be poor and have been hit harder by cuts to social security and provision of public services over the past decade. Women have lower levels of savings and wealth than men. Even before Covid-19, women were more likely to be in debt and this has worsened because of the pandemic. Women's caring responsibilities mean that they are often less able than men to increase their hours of paid work, as childcare costs were increasing above the rate of inflation for several years before this crisis. Women tend to have the main responsibility for the purchase and preparation of food for their children and families, and for the management of budgets of poor households. There are twice as many women as men in the bottom 10% of earners and women make up 60% for those earning below the Real Living Wage [8].

Financial abuse is part of coercive control where the perpetrator limits the control the survivor has over their finances. Women are more susceptible to financial abuse where they are reliant on their partner having more savings and earning capacity. Financial abuse could mean the survivor does not have access to their own funds, has never been able to pay bills or does not have any funds to support themselves when fleeing. As financial abuse is a form of coercive control- which by its insidious nature can be hard to define- it is likely that the actual percentage of survivors who have experienced financial abuse is much higher than those who have explicitly identified it.

Financial stability after abuse can be extremely hard to achieve and maintain and will likely impact a survivor when they move on to new accommodation, for example it may be extremely difficult to navigate bills and may accrue debt. This could escalate to evictions and may have restrictions around renting future properties, instead of being provided the support they require.

Survivors of financial abuse and/or other forms of abuse and violence will face a multitude of barriers to secure suitable and safe accommodation. They may not be deemed a

'desirable candidate' for private landlords due to their financial situation or their association with a perpetrator, in a market which is already grossly competitive. Private rental properties also often require proof of earnings and a deposit up front. There are many different reasons why a survivor may not have the funds for this, due to financial hardship, and therefore would be unlikely to be able to secure a private rental property. This disadvantages those survivors who are not financially stable and creates inequality between survivors depending on their financial situation.

Women being released from prison rarely have the means to have tenancies that enable them to have meaningful relationships with their children, which are often the protective factors that will improve the women from re-offending.

The recent news that Tata Steel UK are cutting jobs at Llanwern steelworks will have further impact on women who make up 40% of the workforce. The loss of 300 jobs will put major pressure on the jobs market in Newport. The social economic environment cannot be understated as an impact of homelessness and is a reoccurring pattern throughout the following five themes.



Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

It is important to recognise that all forms of violence against women – domestic abuse, experiences of sexual violence, financial abuse, sexual exploitation, modern slavery and honour-based abuse, can contribute to women's experiences of homelessness, vulnerable housing situations and being at risk of homelessness. Experiences of sexual violence can also be a contributing factor to homelessness.

Domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation are leading causes of homelessness, particularly for women. Many individuals, particularly women, are forced to leave their homes to escape abusive relationships, often without anywhere else to go. In Newport, as elsewhere, domestic abuse is a significant driver of homelessness, with victims frequently relying on emergency or temporary accommodation. *Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high-level action plan 2021-2026* emphasises that domestic abuse is one of the leading causes of homelessness among women, necessitating a targeted approach to support victims [9]



"I can't go on much longer, working out which bench is safest for me to sleep on or which punter I can stay with for the night for a roof over my head

and working out which one I'm less at risk of being abused by - Its hard work every day. Degrading myself through sex working is not as bad as degrading myself by having services look down on me, judge me and keep me on the bottom of the pile. The services that like to remind me of why I'm in this position, I know more than anyone why I'm here, not the services that don't really understand my life and what I've been through"

The relationship between homelessness and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is predominant. Local audits have demonstrated 100% of the women that Cyfannol Women's Aid support through their refuges and floating support and Newport City Council support for street homelessness have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse and/or being sexually exploited.

There isn't a current statutory definition for adult sexual exploitation. The All-Wales Operational Group on Sexually Exploited Women have established a definition "Sexual exploitation occurs when someone is coerced, forced, or manipulated into engaging in sexual activities by a third party, or out of necessity to finance basic needs" [10]. It is important to have a definition as many women may not recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

While sexual exploitation can include trafficking and modern slavery, it's essential to recognise the broader spectrum of exploitation, especially the more 'hidden' forms. This includes survival sex, where individuals engage in sexual acts to meet basic needs like food, shelter, or money and 'sex for rent' arrangements, where accommodation is offered at a reduced rate or for free in exchange for sexual acts.

For some survivors, this may feel like the only option to secure housing, yet it leaves them vulnerable to further abuse and violence. Sex for rent is illegal in the UK under the Sexual Offences Act, section 54 (2003) and Modern-Day Slavery Act (2015) and landlords can be prosecuted for attempting to engage in sex for rent. There are also situations where the individual offering accommodation is not a legal landlord, but rather a friend or acquaintance. In these cases, the arrangement may be as basic as offering a sofa or bed for the night in exchange for sexual acts.

These situations are inherently exploitative, as perpetrators can use their position of trust to further manipulate, abuse, and control victims.

Without formal landlord or contract agreements, the housing provided remains especially unstable and precarious. Some victims may not even realise they have experienced exploitation. Gwent Police do not collect data on sex for rent, so it has been hard to quantify the impact. Interviews with those working on the frontline state that is a rising problem but difficult to challenge and victims are reluctant to come forward due to stigma, fear of retribution, or feeling ashamed. Many individuals involved in these situations may be in desperate financial situations, complicating perceptions of exploitation versus voluntary participation.

Women that are sexually exploited on the streets are at risk of serious violence every day by the nature of their roles. Many women see this as a hazard of the role which means that they are being retraumatised multiple times. It has been difficult to gain data to understand the impact and any numbers will be vastly under-reported due to multiple reasons.

Gwent Police have a clear policy of not prosecuting women who sell sex for soliciting, focusing instead on targeting exploiters. However, fear of criminalisation or harassment from the police remains, deterring many from seeking help. Combined with a general distrust of the system, this can erode confidence, leading women to believe they won't receive justice. Additionally, victims may fear retaliation from perpetrators, particularly if their identity is known or if they doubt the system's ability to protect them.

Parental child exploitation results in girls as young as twelve/thirteen experiencing sexual exploitation which has been perpetrated by parents or family members. This continues the cycle, and the young girls do not have choices. This makes them vulnerable, and it is highly likely that they will end up in abusive relationships and at risk of homelessness.



Girls in the care system are particularly vulnerable. Local audits have established that 86% of women that are currently in the sexual exploitation service in Newport have been in, or had contact with, the care system. Being sexually exploited or in domestic abusive relationships are the leading causes of homelessness, meaning that girls leaving the care system will be at a much higher risk of being homeless than the general population.

Mental Illness

Mental health problems are both a cause and a consequence of homelessness. People with untreated or poorly managed mental health conditions often struggle to maintain stable employment or housing. In Newport, as in many other regions, the lack of accessible mental health services can result in individuals losing their homes due to difficulties coping with daily life, paying rent, or managing relationships.

Additionally, the experience of homelessness or being at risk of losing housing can significantly impact an individual's mental health, even without a prior diagnosis. Being homeless or precariously housed also increases the risk of developing new mental health conditions.

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and it plays a crucial role in how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Good mental health is about maintaining a balance and coping with life's challenges effectively. Experiences of homelessness or being at risk of homelessness will adversely impact an individual's mental health, regardless of whether they have a diagnosed mental health condition. Being homeless or vulnerably housed can also heighten the risk of developing a mental health condition.

There is recognition that the homeless population often have a history of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as experiencing ongoing and related trauma, stigma and rejection as a homeless woman.

The report into the Clinical Needs of Homeless People in Gwent and Recommendations for Service Development (2024) by Dr Bronwen Davies, Clinical Psychologist states that '*Current mental health services do not have the flexibility, motivation or resource to work with this population effectively*'.

The rough sleeping inquiry 2017 [11], part of the Rough Sleeping Action Plan (Welsh Government) was completed in 2018 [12]. This was followed up in 2019 [13]. The issue being raised was the

difficulty for rough sleepers to access integrated substance misuse and mental health services due to prevalence of co-occurring needs. The report recommended that there needs to be a focus on providing services that meet the needs of service users, in a trauma-informed way, with a no-wrong door approach. This is particularly important for this group of people, who may not reach out to a specialist mental health or substance misuse worker in the first instance and may therefore need help to navigate the system. There were no gender specific actions.

Substance Use

Substance use is closely linked to homelessness. Addiction to drugs or alcohol can lead to financial problems, job loss, and the breakdown of relationships, which in turn increases the risk of homelessness. Newport, like many urban areas, faces challenges related to substance misuse, and individuals affected by addiction may find it difficult to access stable housing or retain accommodation once housed.

Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service assertively engage those in a street-based lifestyle to reduce harm and to help manage their addiction within their available resources and provide rapid access to treatment and support. They also work with social landlords and private landlords to address tenant needs to prevent an escalation to eviction.

Justice

The process by which justice involved women in Newport can access housing is complex. Although there are no female prisons in Wales, women come back to Newport as their place of origin. Many women being released from prison do not know where they will go on leaving prison and do not receive support on the day of release. Emergency accommodation provided upon release is often shared, mixed-gender, and offers minimal support. Furthermore, these settings are frequently located in environments where individuals have previously experienced exploitation or abuse, making them unhelpful for women seeking to avoid a return to addiction, sex work, or domestic violence. Council housing

assessment and support can take a long time during which some women disengage with the process, leave emergency accommodation and potentially return to risky lifestyles. Housing is widely accepted to be a key factor in preventing re-offending. Many individuals face homelessness after leaving prisons. Without proper transition support, they may struggle to find stable housing upon release or discharge. In Newport, those leaving prison or care may find themselves without a secure place to live, increasing their vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and homelessness.

Immigration

Asylum seekers and refugees in Newport face unique challenges in securing stable housing, including language barriers, lack of legal support, and limited access to welfare benefits. Many women encounter additional difficulties due to the NRPF policy, which restricts their access to essential support services. Once their asylum claims are processed, they often struggle to find housing, contributing to homelessness. Welsh Women's Aid has developed a toolkit which talks about these specific duties [14]. Despite Newport having the second highest ethnic population in Wales, currently estimated at 13% [15], this population is not visible in services in Newport.

Intersectionality

Particular groups of women are likely to be disproportionately impacted, given that poverty rates are significantly higher among people from Bangladeshi (53%), Pakistani (48%) and Black (40%) ethnic groups than among White people (19%), making it harder to meet rising living costs [16]. Women with 'no recourse to public funds', who are excluded from claiming social security benefits, are at high risk of poverty, and often destitution, if they lose work, or separate from a partner.

Women experiencing homelessness often face multiple, complex needs, such as mental health issues, substance misuse, and histories of trauma.

As we have explored, the complexities surrounding women's homelessness are particularly pronounced, highlighting the urgent need for targeted solutions. In Newport, there are 25 women classified as rough sleepers as of September 2024, and many more living in precarious situations such as sofa-surfing or engaging in survival sex. The true scale of the challenge is much larger than reported statistics suggest.

The alarming prevalence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, financial instability, and mental health issues, further compounds the risk of homelessness for women. It is evident that temporary accommodations, while necessary, often fall short in providing the safety and support required for women to transition to stable housing. The risks faced by women in these environments, including violence, lack of privacy, and inadequate access to essential services underscore the urgent need for safer, more supportive housing options.

The intersectionality of factors such as ethnicity, economic status, and previous trauma requires a nuanced understanding to address the specific needs of marginalised women. The growing statistics concerning older women experiencing homelessness, domestic abuse and sexual violence signal a growing demographic that demands immediate attention.

Chapter Four: Provision and Demand



The main provider and commissioner of services in Newport is Newport City Council. In Newport, women experiencing homelessness have access to various support systems, though the demand for services has been rising. Demand for homelessness services in Newport has been increasing sharply in recent years. For instance, in 2023, the number of households in temporary accommodation surged, with more than 450 cases being reported. Women represent a significant portion of those seeking help, particularly due to domestic abuse and sexual violence and family breakdowns.

In terms of broader trends, Wales saw over 10,000 women seek help for homelessness in 2017 alone, and the numbers have likely increased since then due to economic pressures and the housing crisis. This chapter is not an exhaustive list of all provision across Newport.

The Live Fear Free line is a confidential support service in Wales, including Newport, aimed at helping individuals affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence, or other forms of violence. The helpline is free, and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Importantly, calls to the helpline will not show up on a landline phone bill.

Women's Services

The Housing Support Grant in Wales is a funding programme designed to provide local authorities and organisations with financial resources to support individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Newport City Council produced a Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2026 Statement of Need to inform the Housing Support Programme Strategy. This contains a section on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and highlights that Newport has recorded the highest number of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC). These are local, multi-agency victim-focussed meetings where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies. Cases in Newport, almost every month this year, constitute between 24% and 42% of all Gwent cases [17].

"I'm tired. I'm tried every day. My socks are soaked, my feet ache and I'm cold. I've walked around the streets for hours and hours. Why can't someone help me."



The main provisions for homeless women often focus on those fleeing domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation, those with mental health challenges, and young mothers. Organisations like **Llamau** play a key role in supporting homeless women in Newport, offering safe, gender-specific accommodation and support. Many women prefer not to use mixed-gender accommodation due to safety concerns, particularly if they have experienced abuse. Llamau was founded in 1986 to provide homeless teenagers with a safe place to stay. Llamau run supported Lodgings Schemes in Newport where individuals or families offer a room and a supportive environment to a young person striving to rebuild their life after homelessness.

Llamau offers various accommodation options, including emergency housing, supported living, and longer-term housing solutions. Llamau also runs Wales' first dedicated 24-hour support and accommodation project for LGBTQ+ homeless young people. Clifton House is gender specific temporary, shared supported accommodation (commissioned via Newport City Council), for women aged 16+ with a range of complex support needs. It is staffed 24 hours and has five units. In 2023/24 seven women were supported, so far in 2024/25, two women have moved on and another two are being supported. Clifton House has supported nine women in total.

Cyfannol Women's Aid provides specialist support for women experiencing any form of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, focusing on addressing their unique needs and challenges. Women facing homelessness are supported based on their individual circumstances, with personalised support plans focusing on both immediate housing-related support needs and longer-term goals, which contribute to prevention of homelessness.

Cyfannol Women's Aid assists women in navigating housing systems, accessing benefits, and understanding their rights and provides programmes aimed at empowering women through understanding their experiences, skills development and confidence-building. Cyfannol Women's Aid offers a range of communal and dispersed refuge properties, commissioned via Newport City Council, with capacity for 16 beds. In addition to this, Arcadia House offers five units of supported housing specifically for women who have been sexually exploited.

Arcadia House is part of **Horizon's** sexual violence support services – a Cyfannol project supporting survivors of any form of sexual violence, including exploitation. Horizon's specialist sexual exploitation support services in Newport are available to women who have experienced sexual exploitation or are at risk of such exploitation. The service provides tailored support for

women, addressing their unique experiences and needs related to sexual exploitation. Immediate assistance is offered to women in crisis, helping them access safe accommodation and emergency support. Beyond this, women are empowered through advocacy to understand their rights and supported to make informed choices about their futures.

The Horizon team creates a safe and non-judgmental space where women can share their experiences and receive support without stigma; working on principles rather than pre-conditions, which means they've been able to work with women who would not have usually interacted with services. The trust needed for women to access this service takes years to build. This service is considered good practice and there is an opportunity to build on and learn from Horizon.

BAWSO is a Welsh charity that supports Black, Asian, and minority ethnic women and their families who have experienced violence and abuse. It offers various services, including advice, advocacy, and support for those facing domestic violence, sexual violence, and other forms of abuse. BAWSO aims to empower individuals through tailored support and to raise awareness about the specific challenges faced by minority ethnic women communities in Wales. BAWSO also has a refuge with capacity of eight spaces. 16 women were supported in 2023/24 and one new person is being supported in 2024/25. BAWSO also offer floating support to women experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence. In 2023/24, 62 women were supported and in 2024/25 (Sept), 41 women have been supported, of which 23 are new. A specific piece of work is needed with BAWSO to understand the demand and cultures that they work within.



Housing

Newport City Council provides access to a range of accommodation, including unsupported temporary accommodation for those with no support needs and commissioned supported accommodation. Newport City Council also works closely with registered social landlords (RSLs) to provide access to social housing with an aim of increasing that provision. Newport City Council has also supported partners to develop innovative projects such as The Hill street modular housing project managed by Linc.

The **Open Door Project** is a multi-faceted support service run by Salvation Army and commissioned by Newport City Council. The Open Door Project provides floating support for individuals residing in temporary accommodation across Newport and provides assertive outreach for individuals who are roofless and sleeping rough in Newport. There are also drop in facilities seven days a week in Newport. For individuals who are sleeping rough they operate an Early Morning Outreach Service providing warm drinks, breakfast snacks and low threshold continuous engagement. This is the method by which Newport City Council confirms their official verified people that sleep rough to report to Welsh Government. To be classified as a verified person that sleeps rough an individual needs to be seen and counted on the breakfast run which is carried out daily. The Open Door Project also offer rapid responsive outreach interventions each working day. People that are currently rough sleeping are regularly engaged with and supported at every opportunity to build trust in services. The aim is to improve the well-being of people that sleep rough as much as possible and to create pathways into accommodation.

Data - VRS

01/10/2023 - 01/10/2024

We have supported with **137 verified rough sleepers (VRS)**.

- 107 (78%) of those were men
- 29 (21%) of those were women
- 1 (~1%) person did not wish to disclose their gender

The **average age** of the women that we have worked with is 37.

9 of those women identified that they had a **recognised disability**

107

29 1



Data - Drop in

01/10/2023 - 01/10/2024

We have supported **284 rough sleepers/ vulnerably housed/transient persons at our drop in**.

- 242 (85%) of those were men,
- 41(14%) of those were women,
- 1 (~1%) person did not wish to disclose their gender.

242

41 1



Many of the females sleeping rough are part of couples with complex dynamics. Often there is some form of domestic violence in the relationship alongside other needs, including physical and mental needs and substance use. Being part of a couple can often make support harder to offer. There is always a challenge when attempting to balance the safety and safeguarding of each individual, against their

desire to remain together as a couple. Many of the females supported by the Open Door Project have physical health needs, sexual health needs and mental health difficulties. Most have experienced extensive trauma prior to, and during, periods of rough sleeping. This can sometimes also manifest in higher risk-taking behaviours, including engaging in unstable relationships, and poly substance use.

The Open Door Project also work in partnership with specialist agencies including Cyfannol Women's Aid to ensure the women who engage with them understand the specialist support that can be made available to them should it be needed.

Newport City Council have commissioned a housing service for people with complex needs, which is delivered by Pobl. The **Complex Needs Supported Accommodation (Albert Street)** has 25 spaces and work with the most complex people that cannot be housed elsewhere. Eviction is the last port-of-call rather than the first. As with Arcadia House, Albert Street also work on principles rather than pre-conditions. Using a person-centred approach, they work with people over the long-term, providing wraparound services, and give people the tools to stay in a tenancy and keep them housed. Like Arcadia House, this an inspiring vision and a lot can be learned and applied elsewhere in the housing sector. 22 people are currently on a waiting list waiting to access Albert Street. In 2023/24, 45 people have been supported, of which seven were women. During April – September 2024/25, 39 people were supported, of which five are new women, with a total of eight women being supported. Albert Street is an excellent project, but the mixed environment may not offer a safe space for women that have experienced sexual exploitation or abuse and may be subjected to re-trauma. There is an opportunity to realise the ambition in the 2022 Housing Support Strategy and make provision of safe, gender specific accommodation to protect women from further harm by having a gender specific service that learns from Albert Street and is wider than sexual exploitation.

Pobl is a Welsh housing and care organisation that provides a range of services to support individuals and communities in Wales. The name "Pobl" means "people" in Welsh, reflecting their focus on community and individual well-being. Pobl offers both tenancies and hostel accommodation alongside with supported living.

Pobl offers Housing First services specifically for women. The Housing First model focuses on providing individuals with permanent housing as a first step, along with wraparound support services tailored to their needs. This service offers personalised support services, including assistance with mental health and substance use. The programme emphasises empowerment, helping women regain control over their lives and encouraging independence. Support extends beyond housing to include access to education, employment opportunities, and community resources. There is an opportunity to work with Pobl to understand if the principles of the models for Arcadia House and Albert Street can be transferred to the Housing First project.



Health and Care

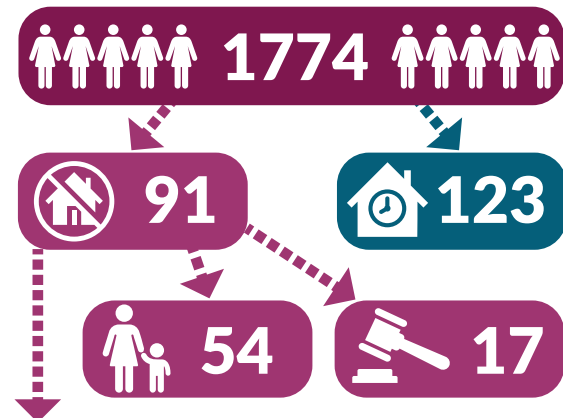
Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) provides free, safe confidential drug and alcohol services. The GDAS Assertive Outreach Service in Newport is commissioned through Newport Housing Support Grant and the Area Planning Board (established in 2010) as part of the new arrangements to deliver the Welsh Government substance misuse strategy 'Working Together to Reduce Harm' [18]. To address the co-occurring needs of substance use and housing and provide the support needed to prevent people with substance use and other complex needs from becoming homeless, stabilising their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.

GDAS supports vulnerable people to address multiple complex needs such as debt, employment, tenancy management, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and mental health issues. Support is person centred, aimed at supporting people to secure and maintain sustainable housing by addressing the mental health and substance misuse or other problems they face, helping to improve their health and well-being and/or helping them progress into, or nearer to, a job or training opportunity based on their specific circumstances.

GDAS provides rapid, flexible and responsive approaches to engage and support homeless people, including the offer of support at times and venues that are favourable for the individual; increasing the capacity and ability of individuals or households to prevent homelessness; and maintain a home or enabling access to suitable housing for individuals or households. One of the central functions as a service is to broker access to other services for people in housing need, navigating systems and advocating assertively where there are barriers to access or support.

GDAS works closely with Cyfannol Women's Aid and the Horizons Sexual Violence Service to support those who engage with the service to meet their specialised needs whilst providing stability through dedicated support staff, ensuring there is consistency with who they engage with through every stage of their journey.

1774 women have been seen at least once this year by GDAS, with 91 of them either homeless at the time of assessment or their address indicating they are homeless at present. 123 women engaged with GDAS are marked as in temporary or precarious accommodation. Of the 91, 54 women are mothers, and 17 of the 91 engaged with our Criminal Justice pathway.



Most are white British with low ethnic diversity.

Ethnicity	#
White British	86
Arab	1
Black British	1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1
White/Asian	1
Ethnicity not given	1

Age	#
19 and under	4
20 - 25	12
26 - 35	33
36 - 45	36
46 - 55	4
55 and over	2

The primary substance of the 91 is:

Heroin	44
Alcohol	36
Cocaine	4
Crack	4
Cannabis	2
Amphetamines	1



Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) provide several services that support the homeless people population, there are no gender specific services. There is the Health Inclusion Service, Boost Psychology Team and mental health services.

The **Health Inclusion Service** provides tailored support to vulnerable women who face barriers to accessing healthcare, with a particular focus on addressing the unique challenges they encounter. Women who are homeless, seeking asylum, or dealing with domestic abuse and sexual violence, substance use, mental health and physical health needs often face specific risks and require sensitive, gender-informed care. Women who access the Health Inclusion Service often have experienced trauma, including domestic violence, sexual exploitation, or abuse. The service adopts a trauma-informed approach, recognising the impact of such experiences on women's health and well-being. This approach ensures that care is provided in a safe and supportive environment, taking into account the psychological, emotional, and physical effects of trauma.

Women experiencing homelessness, substance misuse, or other vulnerabilities may face challenges in accessing maternal and reproductive health services. The Health Inclusion Service offers signposting and works alongside the specialist sexual health nurse for women to access contraception and sexual health services, and help women manage their reproductive health in a safe and confidential manner. Pregnancy care and support is also offered for homeless women or those in temporary accommodation, ensuring that they are registered with GP practices and receive prenatal, antenatal, and postnatal care from their allocated midwife. The service offers support for new mothers, particularly those facing housing instability, and access to health services for their children. Homeless women are often at higher risk of violence, sexual exploitation, and health complications compared to men. The Health Inclusion Service provides outreach to women in refuges, hostels, or on the streets, ensuring they have access to healthcare services in safe, women-friendly spaces. Many vulnerable women face complex health issues, including mental health challenges (such as anxiety, depression, or PTSD) and substance misuse. The

Health Inclusion Service works in partnership with organisations that specialise in supporting women in women's refuges, temporary accommodation and charities that focus on women's health. This ensures that women who access the service receive comprehensive support, not just for their health but also for their housing, legal, and social needs. Asylum-seeking and refugee women may face additional barriers, such as language, legal challenges, and cultural differences. The Health Inclusion Service provides culturally sensitive care, respecting the specific needs and backgrounds of women from different communities.

The Health Inclusion Service saw 96 homeless women and five sex workers from service inception in March 2020 – September 2024; averaging 24 homeless women a year.

Gwent Boost is a National Lottery project funded over a five-year period with the aim of supercharging what is already working to end homelessness in Gwent. The project is a multi-agency approach, combining resources from various organisations to address the complex needs of those affected. There are various streams of work, including the Gwent-wide clinical psychology support. ABUHB provide the psychology support element of the Gwent Boost project.

The **Co-occurring Group** is a multi-agency group chaired by the Clinical Psychologist that leads the Boost Service which crosses substance use and mental health, although not an exclusive women's service. Mental health services in general do not have a higher ratio of workers in Newport despite the higher number of people that rough sleep and hostels across Gwent.

There are various supported housing with private landlords across Newport that support people with mental health issues, with a total capacity of 73 beds. In addition to supported living, there is also floating support, with a total capacity for 24 people. **MIND** has supporting housing with capacity for 20 people and floating support for 90 people (Directory for Housing Support Service in Newport 2023/24).

Justice

The Nelson Trust are able to support women at any point of the criminal justice system including providing support to those women at risk.

There are four women's centres across Wales, including the newest centre in Newport in September 2024. Through a women's centered approach, the Nelson Trust provide holistic and individualised support across the pathways of need, comprising trauma and abuse; families and relationships; accommodation; debt finance and benefits; attitudes thinking and behaviour; education training and employment; sexual violence; substance use; physical and emotional health and well-being. This is achieved through a trauma-informed approach that is rooted in relationships.

The women's centre approach provides a safe space to access one to one support, group interventions, creche facilities, IT and engagement activities, as well as practical support including accessing daily lunch and breakfast clubs, access to donations and washing facilities. The women's centres offer co-location of third sector and statutory services, enabling a one stop shop model for women to access support from one safe space, with the aim of breaking down barriers that have prevented women from accessing services previously. Probation is co-located at the women's centres, as well as sexual health nurses, education training and employment advisors, and Citizen's Advice.

Resettlement support is provided for women upon release from Eastwood Park Prison. Working closely with the Nelson Trust in-reach team, women are prepared for day of release support, addressing the imminent needs of women in terms of providing transport support, accessing appropriate accommodation, renewing benefits claims, access to basic essentials such as clothing, food parcels and personal hygiene products etc. This work complements the women's pathfinder monthly meetings that are multi-agency to consider housing and support options prior to release.

Chapter Five: The Challenges

Social Economic Environment

Increased cost of living is the largest impact and challenge for women. The social economic environment flows through all the causes of women's homelessness. In Newport, this is further compounded with a lack of employment and training opportunities. There is a lack of affordable housing, there is a shortage of rental properties, lack of single sex housing which for victims of VAWDASV is imperative to feel safe, and temporary accommodation isn't suitable for developing family life (lack of cooking facilities).



Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

As stated elsewhere in this report, many victims of VAWDASV may not recognise that they are victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or sexual exploitation. When women do recognise that they are a victim, getting help can be difficult, as pathways to support can be difficult to navigate in Newport. On average it takes seven times for a woman to reach out for help prior to leaving [19]. There is an opportunity to provide preventative advice and support, possibility limiting the time women spend in refuges and temporary accommodation.

The current pathway for advice is through 'Gateway'; a Newport City Council access telephone line for all services. This means when women have a limited period of time to gain advice and support it can be difficult, therefore having an early intervention worker could support some of the engagement with services.

"I was sexually assaulted and beaten up by a punter who left me in the street with no clothes on. I would have done anything at that time to get somewhere safe for the night. I still believe today that if I had somewhere safe to go after what I had been through, that I would have reported the attack to the Police but I didn't- I was out on the streets and needed to make sure I kept myself safe for the rest of that night."



In common with many other areas, there are not enough refuge places, however, as described in Chapter Two, the Renting Homes Act (2016) has inadvertently made accessing refuge places even more difficult. In addition, there are often many preconditions for refuge places that make sense to protect everyone else in the refuge but make it impossible to support those with more complex needs. The refuges and temporary accommodation are in the majority funded via the housing support grant, this means there is a focus on 'housing need' and women being asked this as a primary question to get the support needed, rather than it being assumed that all women experiencing VAWDASV will have a housing need.

There is still an onus on the person to demonstrate that they are a victim rather than that being accepted at face value. This is particularly difficult when women have multiple complexities. There is a further challenge with professional trust where proof of domestic abuse and sexual violence, drug using or homelessness is required rather than actively accepting referrals. This is being compounded as so many services have skeleton teams in place due to sickness and budget cuts.

Within organisations there is a lack of understanding of the 'ask and act' (a process of targeted enquiry to be practiced across the relevant authorities to identify violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence) and the practical application for professions coming into contact with those women that are victims of VAWDASV, this is further compounded with a lack of clear understanding of the safe spaces for women.

It is recognised that there is a system wide need to improve trauma-informed practice and how women accessing all services are responded to. While there has been good uptake on training days for staff in services, more is needed to ensure practice is fully embedded.

Mental Illness

There is stigma attached to mental illness and some behaviours are misinterpreted as difficult and seen as antisocial behaviour. There needs to be wider understanding of the reasons women find it hard to engage with services and work is needed to encourage services to adapt to meet their needs rather than vice versa. As part of its Transformation Programme, Newport City Council has invested in expanding its Housing, Advice and Prevention Team. As part of this work, there is a strategic ambition to co-locate officers in community settings to support earlier interventions and to meet people in trusted environments. Women experiencing multiple disadvantages often find it hard to maintain accommodation for a number of reasons, including mental health and substance use. This can lead to the issuing of warnings and eventual loss of tenancy. There is a need for all agencies to consider how support can be provided to enable landlords to offer a more flexible person-centred approach. There is sometimes very little opportunity in accommodation to work with someone in how to keep a tenancy prior to having one, which can take years of work. The outreach for mental health services is limited in terms of need and this means those most in need find it difficult to access services to support them on a path to housing. There is a gender bias in mental health services, where women

are often not taken seriously, and their issues are attributed to emotional instability. There is a need for compassion for women that self-harm or have suicidal tendencies, as their behaviour can be dismissed as attention seeking. Many mental health services follow a very medical model which does not always adequately address the needs of women with emotional instability. This often results in women being pushed out of services. The chair of the Co-occurring Group emphasised the need for more compassionate and appropriate support for women that is trauma-informed.

Substance Use

There are many similarities between substance use and mental illness, especially the assumptions that are made about the women. The intersection between substance use and mental illness means that people get bounced between the two services trying to understand if the issue is caused by substance use or the mental illness and which one created the other. This means that we are not wrapping services around the person and can delay treatment. This is where the Co-occurring Group plays an important role. Like all services, the waiting times to access services can be lengthy. Substance use and addiction also increases the occurrence of antisocial behaviour which makes these service users particularly difficult to place, as it impacts upon the local community and makes maintaining even temporary accommodations placements difficult. There is a perception that some landlords may have concerns about housing women who use substances and that this group can be stigmatised against. Improved multi-agency work would mitigate this risk and potentially remove barriers to housing. It would also be useful to consider wider harm reduction approaches and what support is needed for these to be implemented.

Justice

One of the largest barriers to women leaving prison is that on the day of release they do not know where they are sleeping that night and many women leaving prison have little or no financial resources, meaning they are at risk of exploitation. There is stigma and discrimination that affects their ability to find supportive housing and many options are not supportive of continuing drug-free life which has been achieved within prison, if being released early via the probation board. Many women leaving prison will need medication and will need to be registered with a GP on the day of leaving prison, which can also be difficult. Many women being released from prison have limited support networks and this can lead to isolation and increased vulnerability to homelessness. Women with children, that have had children temporarily removed, may face additional challenges in finding housing that accommodates their family needs and they become trapped in a vicious circle where they cannot have access to their children (who are protective factors), as they don't have suitable housing, but are classified as a single person because they don't have custody of their children so cannot be housed in family accommodation. The early release scheme to free up prison places has placed additional strain on an already in-demand service. In Newport there is no out-reach probation. There is a women's pathfinder monthly meeting that is multi-agency to consider housing and support options prior to release. This is a well-represented group.



Immigration

One of the largest challenges to emerge is the visibility of ethnic minoritised women in services. This is particularly unanticipated, as Newport is the second ethnic diverse city in Wales. There is a lack of faith in the system and in 1995, BAWSO was established in Cardiff and now works across Wales, giving support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Communication is difficult when English may be a second language and people lack confidence in speaking to services. The trust in the system is important as there are examples of unconscious bias that need to be addressed across services, which can lead to distrust in the system and fear of asking for help. Women that come over on spousal visas are particularly vulnerable as they will not have resource to public funds. There are cultural sensitivities that some women may feel shame on their family by asking for help. Many services are not set-up to support cultural and religious needs, further alienating those women that do come forward for help. The fear around immigration status takes precedence over well-being and seeking support for fear of deportation.

In summary, the challenges faced by women experiencing homelessness are deeply intertwined with systemic issues such as gender inequality, economic instability, and social marginalisation. Throughout this chapter, we have explored the unique vulnerabilities women encounter, including the heightened risks of violence, mental health struggles, and barriers to accessing appropriate services.

These challenges throughout this chapter underscore the urgent need for tailored interventions that prioritise women's safety and well-being. There is an opportunity to develop integrated commissioning to develop gender-sensitive services which address the specific circumstances faced by women in crisis. It has been identified that there is no overnight provision for women that is gender specific in Newport. Women experiencing homelessness face a heightened risk of violence and exploitation. Providing a safe space for rest can help alleviate the stress and trauma associated with homelessness. This is particularly important for women who may have experienced violence or abuse.

Moving forward, it is essential that partners across Newport work collaboratively to create solutions that empower women. By fostering a deeper understanding of these challenges and advocating for systemic change, we can begin to dismantle the barriers that perpetuate homelessness among women.

Chapter Six: Best Practice



Best practice services for addressing homelessness among women focus on comprehensive support, safety, and empowerment.

1. **Trauma-Informed Care:** Services should recognise the impact of trauma on women's lives, providing a safe and supportive environment that fosters healing.
2. **Gender-Specific Programmes:** Tailored programmes that address the unique needs of women, including issues related to domestic violence, mental health, and parenting.
3. **Housing First Approach:** Prioritising access to stable housing without preconditions, allowing women to address other issues, like employment and health, once they have a secure place to live.
4. **Comprehensive Support Services:** Offering access to mental health services, substance use counselling, job training, and childcare to help women regain stability and independence.
5. **Safety and Security:** Ensuring that accommodations provide a safe environment, including measures to prevent violence and harassment.
6. **Peer Support and Community Building:** Creating opportunities for women to connect, share experiences, and support each other, fostering a sense of community.
7. **Culturally Competent Services:** Recognising and addressing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of women, including considerations for race, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability.
8. **Advocacy and Legal Support:** Providing assistance with legal issues, such as navigating housing rights or obtaining benefits, to empower women in their situations.
9. **Outreach and Engagement:** Actively reaching out to women who may be hesitant to seek help, using trusted community networks to build relationships.
10. **Holistic Approach:** Addressing the root causes of homelessness, including poverty, lack of affordable housing, and systemic inequalities, through advocacy and policy work.

Implementing these best practices can significantly enhance outcomes for women experiencing homelessness, enabling them to achieve stability and long-term success. While Newport has many services employing these approaches, they remain fragmented and often lack a gender-specific focus. There is a pressing need to expand trauma-informed practices and build professional trust across all sectors.

The opportunity lies in delivering wraparound, trauma-informed services through integrated, needs-led, and strengths-based commissioning, aligning with the national VAWDASV strategy for Wales and supporting a whole-systems response.

Chapter Seven: What happens next?



Based on the analysis of the current challenges faced by women experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness, several key recommendations emerge.



"I'm a human being... I'm a human being who run away from home when I was a teenager because I was being abused and since then, I feel I am

punished for it. Living on the streets ain't a safe place to be. You never sleep properly. I can't even remember when I had a full nights sleep because I'm scared and have to watch my back every time I bed down. I always wonder whether people walking past me wonder what it's like to be in my wet, stinking shoes- That when I got shoes. The other day I took them off and put them down next to my blanket and someone took them. How bad is life when someone even robs my shoes"

Commissioning women's homelessness services requires a tailored, integrated approach that addresses the specific experiences and challenges faced by homeless women. Women's pathways into homelessness often differ from men's, and they may have higher rates of trauma, domestic abuse and sexual violence and are vulnerable to being at risk of homelessness. The section 'In a Nutshell' summarises the key recommendations of this document.

1. Conduct a Gender-Specific Needs Assessment

All partners need to work together to understand the root causes, by identifying factors contributing to women's homelessness, including domestic violence, sexual abuse, poverty, mental health issues, substance abuse, and housing insecurity.

To understand the root causes there is a need to collect gender-disaggregated data and ensure data is broken down by gender to highlight trends specific to women, such as hidden homelessness (women staying with friends or in insecure housing to avoid street homelessness).

This document has supported us to understand the root causes. It has also highlighted there is much to do in terms of data collection. It is difficult to access data of service users broken down by gender and ethnicity. This makes it difficult to identify disparities in homelessness rates and experiences and it's been harder to highlight specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by different groups in Newport. It also means it is more difficult to design targeted interventions and commission services to address the unique needs of women experiencing, and at risk of, homelessness.

Having a comprehensive dataset would help track progress and monitor trends over time to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. There is a need to work with all services to develop data collection. We must be courageous and set local gender-specific outcomes and develop performance indicators related to women's homelessness in service contracts, such as housing stability, health outcomes, and reductions in trauma or abuse. The outcomes of the census and the data gaps within this report will support the development of performance indicators.

Developing a Women's Homelessness Census across Newport will support raising awareness, identify needs through further collection of data and help quantify the issues and understand the true scope of the challenge. Undertaking a repeat census will help us track changes. The census will help us in engaging service users, but we must go further and involve homeless women in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services to ensure that they meet their real needs. Their input can help tailor services to better fit their experiences and challenges.

2. Trauma-Informed, Women-centred Services

We need to develop trauma-informed care models that recognise and respond to the effects of trauma. Many homeless women have experienced significant trauma, including domestic violence or childhood abuse.

Gender-sensitive spaces are very important and we need to enable creation of women-only environments to ensure safety and comfort, particularly for survivors of abuse who may feel unsafe in mixed-gender services. There is an opportunity to work with partners to develop overnight provision for women during Winter 2024/25. Providing overnight accommodation for women rough sleeping is not just about offering a place to sleep; it is a crucial component of a compassionate and effective response to homelessness, aimed at promoting safety, health, and long-term stability.

Person-centered approaches are imperative to tailor interventions to individual women's needs, considering factors like mental health, family responsibilities, and previous trauma.

This report has identified that organisations are providing training for trauma-informed practice, but we need to close the gap and ensure that there is cultural change. All partners self-assessing against the Welsh Government trauma-informed framework, and development of training plans to embed the trauma-informed practice, will support cultural change.

The Health Inclusion Service at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board does offer health services integration for homeless women who often face significant health disparities. The service is not adequately staffed to deliver a service pan Gwent, and this means there is no additional dedicated resource for Newport which has the largest homelessness population. The work is intensive and that has meant it has been challenging to retain staff. The service has adopted a new approach by employing mental health nurses who can work in trauma-informed practice. The service is 9-5pm, but by the nature

of the vulnerable women that the service works with, evening shifts for outreach provision would provide a more equitable service. An Inclusion Health Needs Assessment is being undertaken in April 2025 which will inform the baseline and understand the need.

There are limited outreach services, with skeleton staff and limited working hours. Many homeless women remain hidden or avoid traditional services out of fear or shame. We need to consider commissioning integrated outreach teams to engage with women on the street, in refuges, or in unsafe housing situations, offering flexible, low-barrier entry points to support.

3. Domestic Violence and Abuse Support

There needs to be specialised support for abuse survivors; many women become homeless due to domestic violence. We need to commission services that include crisis support, legal assistance, refuge accommodation and services which incorporate holistic therapeutic models of recovery that are not timebound. We must provide more safe accommodation to those women that are sexually exploited using the existing model developed by Cyfannol Women's Aid (Arcadia House provides five beds as part of the Horizon service). Providing secure, staffed accommodation where women can feel safe, particularly those who may be fleeing violence or exploitation, is paramount to build trust.

This report has identified the lack of crisis drop-in support. To ensure we are also being preventative, we will trial an implementation period of an early intervention worker to work with women experiencing violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, to understand the impact of such a post.

We need to commission integrated services that co-ordinate between homelessness services and domestic abuse and sexual violence organisations to ensure women fleeing violence can access safe housing quickly and receive ongoing support (e.g., counselling, legal aid, and protection orders). We need to work with Welsh Government and

support specialist services' calls to remove refuge accommodation from the legislative barriers created by the Renting Homes act (2016).

4. Access to Housing Options

There is a need in Newport to develop and prioritise rapid rehousing programmes, ensuring women can quickly transition from homelessness or unsafe living conditions to secure, long-term housing.

To provide diverse housing models, it needs to be recognised that women's housing needs vary; some may need emergency refuge and accommodation, while others require longer-term supported housing. We need to ensure a range of housing solutions, including transitional housing and permanent supportive housing.

There is a need to ensure family-friendly accommodations and that housing services are able to cater for women with children by providing family accommodations, so they aren't separated from their dependents and can support the early years and best start in life.

There is a great opportunity to further develop the 'Women's Housing Pathway' with Pobl Housing and Newport City Council that limits the preconditions, allowing women to address other issues, like employment and health, once they have a secure place to live.

5. Prevention and Early Intervention

Target early intervention: Identify women at risk of homelessness, such as those facing eviction, relationship breakdowns, or domestic abuse and sexual violence, and offer preventive services (e.g., housing advice, financial support, or legal aid). The trial implementation period of an early intervention worker within violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will have a focus on early intervention support.

To destigmatise and raise awareness, we need to develop public education campaigns focussing on the specific vulnerabilities of women experiencing

homelessness, helping to destigmatise their experiences and encourage early help-seeking. We will be developing our first campaign by May 2025 with a 'Women of Newport' photography exhibition showing the journeys of women who have experienced homelessness and demonstrating that recovery is possible.

This will be followed up with a campaign 'Walk in my Shoes' later in 2025 to share women's stories, break down stigma and change perceptions of women's homelessness in Newport.

6. Address Specific Needs of Marginalised Women

This report is under-representative of the needs of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and LGBTQ+ women in Newport. There is a specific piece of work to undertake to understand the needs of marginalised women, in order that we develop culturally sensitive services that are accessible to women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and offer support tailored to the specific challenges faced by ethnic minority and migrant women. We will undertake further work with BAWSO.

Recognising that LGBTQ+ women may face unique barriers to accessing services and may experience homelessness differently, is important to ensure we provide services that are inclusive and affirming of their identities. This needs further work.

Conclusion

The Homewards Newport Working Group on Women's Homelessness has demonstrated we are stronger together to provide services if we collaborate across sectors. Homelessness is linked with other social issues, such as mental health, justice system involvement, or substance use. We need to continue to foster partnerships across health services, criminal justice, housing authorities, and welfare systems to provide seamless care. There is a need to commission wraparound services that provide holistic support, including mental health care, substance abuse treatment, employment support, financial counselling, and assistance with benefits and entitlements.

- Ensuring safety and confidentiality must be prioritised in all service settings.
- Ensure women's privacy and personal data protection, especially for those fleeing abusive situations.

Partnerships with specialist providers is a theme that runs through all the recommendations. We need to work with women-specific service providers to collaborate with specialist women's homelessness organisations, particularly those with experience supporting survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence or trafficking, such as Cyfannol Women's Aid and the services that they provide.

To end homelessness, there is a need to ensure long-term funding by securing sustainable funding streams for women's homelessness services to provide stability and continuity of care, ensuring women can move from crisis support to long-term solutions. This means shifting the focus from emergency response to long-term prevention by investing in affordable housing, supported living, and housing-first approaches for women exiting homelessness.

Ending women's homelessness is not just a matter of providing shelter; it requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that addresses the underlying issues contributing to this crisis. By recognising the unique challenges faced by women, the partners of Newport can support integrated commissioning that designs targeted interventions that prioritise their needs. Collaborative efforts across the stakeholders and through involving homeless women in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services to ensure that they meet their real needs, is an essential approach to create supportive environments that empower women to regain stability and independence.

With a concerted effort, we can work towards a future where every woman in Newport has the opportunity to secure a safe and stable home, breaking the cycle of homelessness and its associated challenges for good.

We extend our gratitude to all those who played a role in creating this report. We would like to thank all the partners who have been part of the women's group:

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