

Temporary accommodation: The front door to more settled futures

Swansea Council

August 2026

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Contents

Audit snapshot	4
Key facts and figures	6
Our findings	7
Recommendation	13
Appendices	14
1 About our work	15
2 Key terms in this report	17
3 Timeline of redesign	19

Audit snapshot

What we looked at

- 1 This audit looked at Swansea Council's (the Council) arrangements to show value for money through its redesigned temporary accommodation provision.

Why this is important

- 2 Councils in Wales provide temporary accommodation because the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 creates a legal duty to do so, particularly under the interim accommodation duty (Section 68) when someone may be homeless and in priority need. The Council also has wider duties to secure value for money in its use of resources.
- 3 Audit Wales's 2025 report [Temporary accommodation, long-term crisis?](#) highlighted rising cost and demand pressures across Wales. It found that councils often view value for money too narrowly. There is more focus on short-term cost control rather than outcomes, prevention, and whole-system performance. The report emphasised the need for stronger governance, data, monitoring, and engagement to secure longer-term value for money.
- 4 The Council has redesigned its temporary accommodation approach in response to increased demand, more complex needs, and wider housing market pressures. The increasing costs of providing temporary accommodation and increasing demand reinforce the importance of the Council having proper arrangements to secure value for money.
- 5 As part of this, it is also important that monitoring arrangements capture if the Council is achieving its intended outcomes.

What we have found

- 6 The Council understands demand for temporary accommodation well. It has redesigned its temporary accommodation approach using that understanding.
- 7 The Council is in the early stages of delivering its new approach which includes the development of two temporary accommodation facilities. Those facilities are based in Llys Glas and Boutique Student Living (Sun Alliance) in the city centre. At the time of our audit, the Council had opened Llys Glas but not Sun Alliance. The Council anticipates Sun Alliance becoming operational in February 2027.
- 8 The Council has set out its objectives and goals across several plans. The Council regularly monitors activity under those plans. This provides good oversight of activity.
- 9 However, the Council's arrangements to monitor the overall value for money of its new approach are not yet fully developed. It intends to develop a wider set of person-centred outcome measures, including repeat presentations. Those measures would help the Council develop a more rounded assessment of the overall impact of the redesign. This would also inform its understanding of the extent to which it is securing improved value for money.

What we recommend

- 10 We have made one recommendation to support improvement. It focuses on helping the Council to better understand and show value for money in its temporary accommodation provision.

Key facts and figures

11 This section highlights information that shows the scale of demand, cost and pressure on the Council's homelessness and temporary accommodation services.

- In 2025-26, the Council received on average **80** homelessness presentations per week, with a peak of 110 in January.
- In 2025-26, the number of households in temporary accommodation peaked at **419** in January 2026, falling to 389 by the end of March 2026. Of these 389, 341 were in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation.
- The number of households in B&B fell to **283** by the end of March 2026 following the opening of Llys Glas (the Council's temporary accommodation scheme developed with Pobl and Welsh Government).
- The Council predicts that future homelessness presentations will continue to exceed **4,000** per year.
- The Council's **gross** spend on B&B accommodation increased from **£6 million** in 2024/25 to **£7.2 million** in 2025/26.

Related legislation:

- **Housing (Wales) Act 2014**: the main law setting out councils' homelessness duties in Wales.
- **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**: law requiring public bodies in Wales to think about long-term impact, prevention, and joined-up working.
- **Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016**: law that changed housing arrangements in Wales and aims to improve how housing is provided and managed.
- **Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Act 2026**: new legislation intended to strengthen homelessness prevention and widen access to support and housing.

Our findings

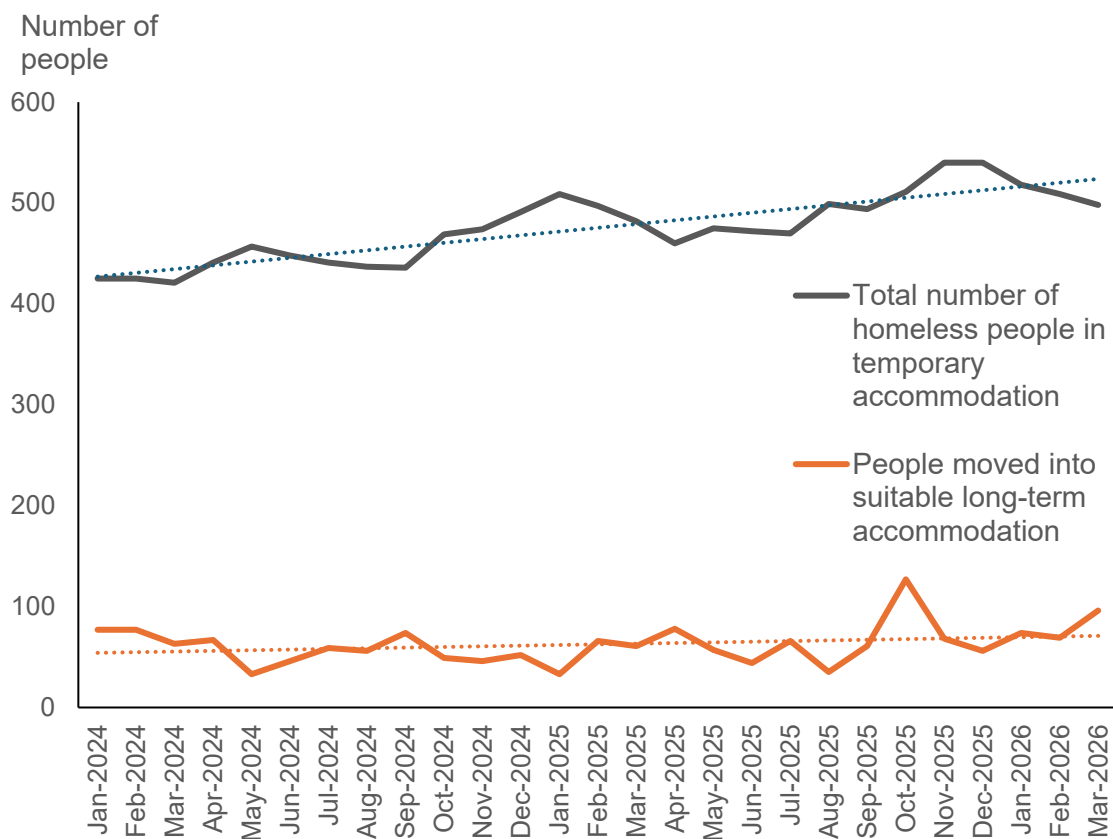
Understanding

The Council has a good understanding of the pressures on homelessness services

- 12 The Council understood the need to redesign its approach to providing temporary accommodation. It used data showing increasing demand for temporary accommodation due to factors, including:
- Local Housing Allowance rates being below the market rate for rents;
 - Growing poverty levels and the cost-of-living crisis;
 - Limited move-on accommodation options;
 - Increasing numbers of prison leavers;
 - Loss of accommodation with friends or family;
 - Increasingly complex needs; and
 - Hidden homelessness.
- 13 The Council experienced sustained and significant pressure in recent years, as shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1: demand for temporary accommodation in Swansea versus availability of suitable long-term accommodation from January 2024 to March 2026

The graph below shows the total number of homeless people in temporary accommodation over time compared with the number of people moved into suitable long-term accommodation.



Source: Audit Wales analysis of Welsh Government data

14 The Council redesigned its provision in response to rising demand and the factors contributing to homelessness. We were told that those factors included:

- change in legislation to priority need;
- cost of living crisis; and

- early release scheme by Home Office.

It had recognised that its previous approach was not financially sustainable. This had included an increasing use of B&B accommodation since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The Council had intended that it would use B&B accommodation for a short time. But due to a lack of alternative longer-term accommodation and other factors, it had seen the average length of stay in B&B accommodation increase significantly.

- 15 A good understanding of the main drivers of demand gave the Council a sound basis for redesigning its temporary accommodation provision.

Clarity of planning

The Council has not clearly set out how it will measure success

- 16 The Council is clear on its overall aim to help make homelessness 'rare, brief and unrepeatable' in line with national ambitions.¹ As shown in the timeline in **Appendix 3**, the Council's goals relating to the redesign were developed over time and set out across a range of strategies, business cases, Cabinet decisions, and other documents. This iterative approach makes it harder to understand the overall success measures.
- 17 The Council's focus has mainly been on shorter-term B&B cost avoidance by opening its own provision. It has not clearly set out how it will use its existing data to assess quality, outcomes and person-centred measures alongside cost avoidance savings over the medium-to longer-term. The Council acknowledges that it could develop further success measures to help it better understand the success of its approach. Doing this would help the Council show if the redesign is improving outcomes for people and delivering value for money overall.

¹ Ending homelessness in Wales: A high-level action plan 2021-2026, Welsh Government, 2021

Exhibit 2: What we mean by value for money

Value for money is about whether money is being used to deliver intended outcomes at the best price. This is also sometimes referred to as 'cost effectiveness'. Value for money is commonly associated with the 'three E's' of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. We have summarised these as:

- Economy – Getting the right deal – securing the necessary inputs, to help achieve intended outcomes, at the lowest possible cost.
- Efficiency – Doing things right – making the most of the inputs to generate outputs designed to achieve intended outcomes.
- Effectiveness – Getting the right results – achieving the intended outcomes for the short and longer term.

Value for money is therefore not just about costs, but about the quality and effectiveness of the service delivered for the money spent. People living in temporary accommodation are often in a vulnerable situation and need support to help them move into stable and appropriate accommodation.

Source: Audit Wales, *Temporary accommodation, long-term crisis?*, 2025

- 18 The Council has managed some risks to its temporary accommodation redesign. It has identified risks including funding pressures, high demand, and limited move-on options, and has secured Welsh Government funding and recruited staff. Those actions have supported the delivery of the redesign.
- 19 The Council has also planned for some longer-term changes. For example, it has appropriately set out alternative future uses for the buildings currently being used for temporary accommodation. This shows that the Council has considered the longer-term use of those buildings.
- 20 Importantly, however, the Council has not clearly planned how it will address limited move-on options. The Council is aware that without sufficient move-on accommodation, people may stay in temporary accommodation longer than intended, blocking the pathway and increasing the risk of renewed reliance on B&B accommodation. This increases the risk that the redesign will not achieve its intended outcomes.

Knowing if it is achieving its intended outcomes

The Council does not have a strategic overview of improved outcomes or value for money

- 21 The Council uses its Housing Support Grant Outcomes Framework to monitor activity and demand, including the number of households in temporary accommodation and the time people spend in such accommodation. It also captures short-term outcomes. Whilst this data provides a clear picture of activity, it does not fully show if people's outcomes are improving over the medium-to longer-term.
- 22 The Council is not making the most effective use of its available data to understand the impact of its change. Its reports highlight the reduction in the use of B&B accommodation and reduced costs after it opened Llys Glas in spring 2026. The Council also holds data around:
 - volumes (households/people in temporary accommodation);
 - flows (placements and move-on);
 - duration (length of stay); and
 - accommodation type (especially B&B).
- 23 Whilst the Council holds this data, it could develop further person-centred outcome measures to assess the wider impact of the redesign. That development would help it show how it helps to improve people's longer-term housing stability and well-being through its temporary accommodation. By doing this the Council would be better placed to understand how its redesign is helping it to make the best use of available funding.

- 24 Although the Council collects and uses its own trend data well, it uses wider comparison and benchmarking information less regularly. It contributes to the national datasets on homelessness. However, the Council could strengthen its strategic understanding of performance by using the available data. For example, its understanding of repeat presentations. Doing this will help the Council to demonstrate that its approach is contributing to making homelessness 'rare, brief and unrepeated'.

Recommendation

- 25 Our recommendation reflects the improvement themes identified in our national report on temporary accommodation. It focuses on broadening the Council's definition and understanding of value for money by demonstrating outcomes.

R1 Develop and implement a value for money and outcomes framework

The Council should develop and implement a clear framework to bring together all the information it needs to understand if its temporary accommodation redesign is delivering value for money. This should include:

- defined financial, service, and person-centred outcomes (**paragraphs 16, 17, 21, 22 and 23**);
- agreed baselines, targets, and timescales for each measure (**paragraphs 16 and 17**);
- a balanced set of indicators covering cost, quality, and outcomes (for example, length of stay, move-on, repeat homelessness presentations) (**paragraphs 17, 21, 22, 23 and 24**);
- regular reporting of performance against these measures to senior officers and members (**paragraphs 21, 22, 23 and 24**).

Appendices

1 About our work

Scope of the audit

The audit covered the Council's arrangements for assessing value for money in its temporary accommodation provision. It examined how the Council plans, delivers, and monitors these arrangements. We did not assess the effectiveness of the temporary accommodation redesign.

We undertook this audit in March to May 2026.

Audit questions and criteria

Questions

The audit looked to answer the following questions:

- Did the Council understand what it needed to do in redesigning its temporary accommodation provision to secure improved value for money?
- Does the Council have a clear plan of action?
- Does the Council know if it is achieving its intended outcomes?

Criteria

Our audit criteria set out what good looks like. These criteria have been informed through our cumulative audit knowledge. They focus on a combination of the principles set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and indicators around value for money.

Methods

This audit used the following methods:

- reviewing documents;
- interviewing relevant officers and councillors; and
- analysing relevant published and Council-held data.

2 Key terms in this report

Term	Description
Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation	A type of temporary accommodation, often used in emergencies, where people stay in guesthouse-style rooms with limited space and facilities.
Benchmarking	Comparing performance, costs or results with other organisations or recognised standards to understand how well a service is working.
Complex needs	Situations where a person needs support with multiple issues at the same time, such as mental health, substance misuse, trauma, or physical health problems.
Cost avoidance	Money the Council does not have to spend because action taken earlier reduces the need for more expensive services later.
Hidden homelessness	People who do not appear in official homelessness figures but do not have a stable or suitable home, such as people sofa surfing or staying temporarily with friends or family.
Homelessness presentation	When a person or household approaches the Council for help because they are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
Local Housing Allowance	The maximum housing benefit that can usually be paid for private rented accommodation in a local area, based on market rent levels and household size.

Move-on accommodation	Longer-term housing that people can move into after leaving temporary accommodation.
Outcomes	The results achieved for people and services, such as improved housing stability, safety, or well-being.
Person-centred outcomes	Results that focus on what matters to the person, such as feeling safe, having stable housing, and being able to access support.
Prevention	Action to prevent homelessness at primary, secondary and tertiary stages. It means stopping it before it happens, or responding early when someone is at risk, and helping prevent it happening again.
Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan	The Council's plan for moving away from long stays in temporary accommodation and helping people into settled housing as quickly as possible.
System pressures	Wider issues that affect the service, such as high demand, lack of affordable housing, funding constraints, or increasing complexity of need.
Temporary accommodation	Short-term housing provided to people who do not have a suitable home and need somewhere safe to stay while longer-term housing options are arranged.
Temporary Accommodation Pathway	The Council's process for deciding how people are referred into and supported through temporary accommodation.
Value for money	Making the best use of money and resources to achieve the right balance between cost, quality, and outcomes. See Exhibit 2 .

3 Timeline of redesign

When	What happened
October 2021	The Council commissioned a six-day Systems Thinking Review of homeless temporary supported accommodation (Vanguard-facilitated) to identify improvements.
Early 2022	A project group met to design a centralised referral pathway, and it was agreed to refer to this as the Temporary Accommodation Pathway (TAP).
April 2022	Publication of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan covering April 2022–March 2027.
October 2022 (pilot start)	TAP pilot began.
January 2023	Post-pilot analysis enabled stakeholders to agree to continue with TAP, following review of pilot success measures.
16 November 2023 (Cabinet decision point)	Cabinet approves a report proposing that the Council develops and operates Llys Glas as a Temporary Supported Accommodation Project. Referrals are made via TAP.
18 December 2023	Housing Steering Group report set out temporary emergency measures due to capacity pressures, including a stated need to ‘bring Llys Glas on-line at the earliest opportunity.’

When	What happened
15–17 September 2025	Integrated Impact Assessment screening form for Phase 2 (signed/dated) describes pressures, links actions (increasing temporary accommodation provision, TAP development, permanent accommodation) and states Llys Glas was ‘due to open in late Autumn 25’.
18 November 2025 (Scrutiny)	Scrutiny progress report states the Council had been working with Welsh Government and Pobl to develop Llys Glas. Report anticipates that Llys Glas was ‘likely’ to be operational from early December 2025.
25 March 2026	Homeless Services Coordination Cell meeting minutes state that ‘figures have been affected by the opening of Llys Glas.’
April 2026	Llys Glas temporary accommodation scheme became fully operational.

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