

RCTCBC - Local Toilets Strategy – Interim Progress Statement – November 2025

Appendix 1



Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

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

Context

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires each Local Authority within Wales to publish a local toilets strategy. Rhondda, Cynon Taf Council's first strategy was published in May 2019, covering the period May 2019-May 2023, with a [revised version](#) published in May 2023, covering the period May 2023 – May 2028.

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 Part 8 focuses on 'Provision of Toilets'. The provision and maintenance of toilets in public places is a discretionary function of local authorities who have the power under section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936 to provide public conveniences. There is no duty for local authorities to provide public toilets directly.

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 also stipulates that, where Local Authorities provide public toilets, they must action a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed; addressing factors such as location, accessibility, facilities, frequency of use and quality of existing sites, as well as determining whether additional or fewer sites are required by their local population.

Rhondda, Cynon Taf Council has reviewed existing toilet provision in council owned facilities across the local authority area during the strategy writing process.

To support the requirements of the Act, Rhondda, Cynon Taf Council has adopted an integrated, community-centric approach to the provision of public toilets.

The 2023 – 2028 strategy retained the two key objectives established in the original strategy:

Strategic Objectives

- To enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities
- To promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities

These objectives are supported by a number of actions for implementation, whilst encompassing future consideration and opportunities to assess the evolving needs of local communities.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) is required to publish an interim statement on the progress that has been made against the 2023 – 2028 Local Toilets Strategy and Plan which follows this introduction.

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The statement covers the period between May 2023 and May 2025.

Strategic Aim

To achieve the strategic aims of the RCT Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028 Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC committed to:

- identify the current level of provision of public toilets;
- analyse the findings of the completed assessment of need for toilets available for use by the public in their area;
- consider the requirements of the general population;
- identify the needs for particular user groups;
- identify any gaps in current provision;
- support Welsh Government initiatives to improve information available on toilet facilities;
- provide information setting out the steps which the local authority proposes to take to meet this need, and any other information which the council considers appropriate.

Key Developments

During the period May 2023 – May 2025 the following key developments have taken place:

- The availability of changing place toilets across the borough has increased from 8 in 2023 to 11 in 2025, funded by the Local Authority with three new developments, two of which are in community venues, and one in the transport hub, as detailed below.
- A multi-service workplan has been developed to monitor the work and progress being made against the RCTCBC Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028 commitments.
- Improved awareness and information available on Council owned toilet provision and additional facilities in community venues and private businesses via web-based developments. See [link](#).
- Worked with the South Wales Police, members of the public, and community groups to ensure facilities remain safe and worked with partners to improve toilet provision close to key night-time gathering areas. Council officers continue to work closely with the police to improve safety in public toilets, no incidents of antisocial behaviour have been reported, and the police maintain ongoing monitoring.
- Implemented dementia-friendly improvements such as increasing colour contrast in Council owned facilities. Of the 18 public toilet locations, 8 have been improved (33 individual toilets), and now feature colour contrast seating. Future plans include the replacement of the remaining white seats with black for improved contrast.
- Reviewed ratio of male to female facilities and provision for the LGBTQI+ community. Across the 18 public toilet facilities, there are 20 male-designated

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and 38 female-designated toilets, along with 14 accessible toilets. These accessible toilets are provided to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- Reviewed commitment by the Council to maintain RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) key accessible toilet facilities.
- Period Dignity products made available in community venues across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The range of products includes climate-friendly sustainable options.
- Signage has been improved to enhance visibility, where smaller faded gender signs have been replaced with larger, more prominent signs which may improve accessibility for individuals who have visual impairments.
- Launched a pilot scheme to support the successful hosting of the National Eisteddfod for Wales in Pontypridd in August 2024. The scheme enabled non-customers to use toilet facilities in participating business and community venues. There are now 7 Leisure Centres, 7 Libraries, and 8 local businesses displaying the scheme's toilet logo sticker to indicate publicly accessible facilities.

Progress Against the Aims of the Strategy

To improve monitoring and progress tracking, a multi service workplan has been developed. This framework enables regular oversight of the strategy and its key actions through scheduled meetings and biannual progress reviews. It fosters shared ownership of the strategy and strengthens accountability across teams.

During routine maintenance, faded gender signage was replaced with larger and more prominent signs, enhancing visibility and potentially improving accessibility for individuals with visual impairments. With an ongoing commitment to replace any faded signs with larger more prominent signs in future.

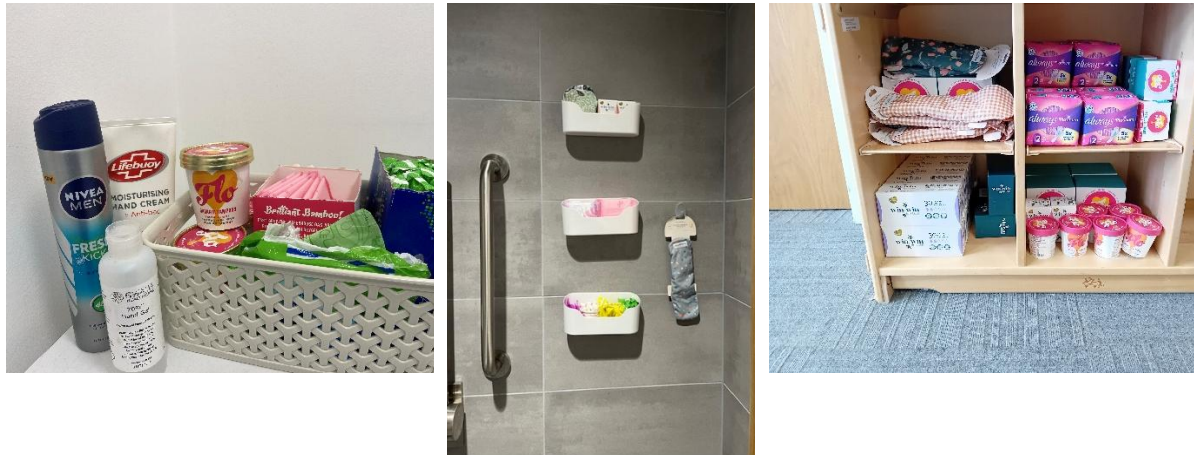


Building on the development of Community Hubs since their original approval by Cabinet in 2018, support have been enhanced through the introduction of period dignity products in toilet facilities across all hubs and libraries within the borough, as well as within a range of community venues working with third sector partners. In total 68 venues across the borough stock products, with this initiative ensuring

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users have access to essential items in a discreet and inclusive manner, supporting health and wellbeing.

Importantly, the product range includes climate-friendly, sustainable options, aligning with broader environmental commitments and promoting responsible choices. This development reflects a continued commitment to equity, accessibility, and sustainability within community services.



To support the successful hosting of the National Eisteddfod for Wales in Pontypridd in August 2024, recognising the challenge of increased visitation and limited toilet provision, a collaborative approach with local partners was adopted.

A pilot scheme enabled non-customers to use toilet facilities in participating businesses, significantly increasing the number of accessible toilets across the town centre. A total of eight businesses joined the initiative; each displaying a designated toilet sticker and being listed on the Council's ["Find a Toilet"](#) webpage. This approach not only improved visitor experience but also demonstrated strong community engagement and responsiveness to public needs. This approach will now be built upon, as the Community Toilet Scheme, with additional business and community organisations across the borough.

Dementia Friendly

Aligning with RCTCBC's Age Friendly Communities work programme, and in support of local Dementia Friendly Communities, the Authority is committed to making positive changes to improve life for those living with dementia.

During routine maintenance, any facilities requiring upgrades, repairs, or replacements, will incorporate colour contrast materials to enhance accessibility for individuals living with dementia. This approach supports clearer visual cues, reduces confusion, and promotes safer navigation within public spaces. By embedding inclusive design principles into routine maintenance, the service continues to prioritise dignity, independence, and equal access for all users. To date, across the 18 public toilet facilities, 33 toilets now feature colour contrast seating using a moulded "Wallgate" design as shown below.

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Changing Places

Changing Places toilets are facilities that enable everyone, regardless of their access needs, disability or reliance on the assistance of carers or specialist equipment, to use a toilet facility with dignity and hygienically.

People with a range of disabilities may require extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably.

The provision of Changing Places enables people to have more choice to access more activities in the community, without having to go home, be changed in undignified circumstances or be uncomfortable and feel unhygienic. Scoping of the position regarding the availability of changing places in Rhondda, Cynon Taf has been completed and where additional facilities have been identified these have been registered with www.changing-places.org.

In addition to existing facilities as previously reported two additional Changing Places have been developed since May 2023.

Arts Factory, Maerdy – RCTCBC worked in partnership with an established community group, supporting them with external grant funding, to refurbish their toilets which offers facilities beyond what is normally provided in a standard accessible toilet, including electric hoisting and adult changing bed.

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Gilfach Goch Community Association – following extensive mapping and scoping of existing facilities and areas where provision was lacking this venue was identified as the preferred location for a new Changing Place facility. RCTCBC worked in partnership with an established community group, supporting them with external grant funding to refurbish a rundown shower block on the ground floor of the building. Now offering facilities beyond what is normally provided in a standard accessible toilet, including accessible toilet and shower, electric hoisting and adult changing bed.



Porth Transport Hub - opened in early 2025, the Porth Transport Hub provides a modern quality transport interchange operated and managed by Transport for Wales. The new Transport Hub includes public toilet facilities, together with an accessible toilet / changing place provision and baby change facility.

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Improving awareness and information available on toilet provision

It is essential that residents and visitors are able to easily and quickly find the nearest suitable toilet facilities for their needs, so they are able to go outside and participate fully in their community and local authority area.

Developing existing web-resources to increase information on available facilities, the Council's "[Find a Toilet](#)" webpage was created, this facility also provides mapping / direction links via google maps to improve accessibility especially for visitors who may be unfamiliar with the local area. This was undertaken as a pilot in the Pontypridd and surrounding area in response to the Eisteddfod held locally during 2024.

Following on from the successful pilot scheme in Pontypridd, RCTCBC are now working in partnership with businesses and community organisations to increase access to toilet facilities across the [borough](#).

Future plans include collaboration with the Third Sector and Businesses to roll out a Community Toilet Scheme across the area. Businesses and community organisations will be able to for the scheme using an online process and show they are part of the scheme by displaying a Community Toilet Scheme window sticker. The online process is currently under development, and nearing completion, along

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with promotional flyers, both will be ready for the new campaign to launch during September 2025.

Cleansing and maintenance protocols

Council maintained toilet facilities are subject to rigorous routine cleansing operations. Council owned public toilets and urinals in RCT are cleaned Monday – Saturday with all facilities except disabled toilets closed on Sundays.

Regular maintenance is carried out when needed and in response to reported defects. This maintenance addresses issues, such as broken toilets, and is dealt with by dedicated officers within the service. The electrical locking systems remain in place so facilities can be opened and closed remotely, allowing more time to be allocated for cleaning routines. The system can also be used for instances when toilets need to be closed urgently.

The maintenance and cleaning of toilets provided through the Community Toilet Scheme, including those located in Hubs, Libraries, and Leisure facilities are the responsibility of the respective building owners, managers, or service areas.

Consultation

Aligning with the Council's Age Friendly Communities work programme engagement and consultation directly with older people continues via local 50+ Forums, Neighbourhood Networks, the RCT Older Persons Advisory Group, Community Groups for Older People.

A summary detailing the key themes from feedback on toilet provision during late 2022 is presented below confirming that, although improvements have been made the key findings from the original 2019 consultation remain valid:

Accessibility and Availability

- Concerns raised about the limited availability of disabled and pregnancy-friendly toilet facilities.
- Restricted opening hours, particularly in the evenings, prevent some residents from accessing toilets when needed.
- Community workers highlighted the need for better promotion of existing facilities in public buildings.

Support for Community Participation

- Access to toilets is essential for participation in physical and social activities, such as walking groups.
- Adequate toilet provision in town centres is seen as a key factor in encouraging footfall and supporting local businesses.

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Signposting and Public Awareness

- Lack of clear signage makes it difficult for residents and visitors to locate public toilets.
- People are often reluctant to ask strangers for directions, indicating a need for improved visibility and communication.

Standards and Cleanliness

- Feedback emphasised the importance of clean facilities with basic amenities such as hooks, shelves, and bins.
- Cleanliness was consistently mentioned as a priority for users.

Business and Community Collaboration

- Many businesses informally allow public use of their toilets, but expectations around purchases can deter access.
- There is potential for stronger partnerships between the Council and local businesses to formalise and promote toilet access.

Cost and Payment Convenience

- Small charges (e.g. 20p) are generally accepted, but outdated payment methods (e.g. requiring coins) are seen as a barrier.
- Modernising payment options could improve accessibility and user experience.

What happens next?

RCTCBC will review the Local Toilets Strategy 2023 – 2028 with any required revision of the strategy in readiness for publication in May 2028.

Responsibility for delivering RCTCBC's Toilets Strategy will remain with the Community Development Team who hold the developed workplan and oversee monitoring and progress reporting via scheduled meetings and six-monthly progress reviews to ensure continued shared ownership and accountability across service areas. The team will continue to ensure all council developments consider resident needs in terms of public toilets, community toilets and changing places.

In order to better support people with dementia in our communities, dementia friendly improvements will continue to be installed. Improving colour contrast in these facilities will assist those with dementia to make safe use of bathroom facilities.

To ensure that facilities are accessible to everyone, regardless of their access needs, disability or reliance on the assistance of carers or specialist equipment, to use a toilet facility with dignity and hygienically.

New accessible signage to tackle discrimination will be considered for installation in council and community facilities.