

NEWS RELEASE

Homelessness Symposium helps organisations get their house in order for Housing (Wales) Act

EMBARGOED until 17 October, 10.30am

Cymorth Cymru today (17 October) hosted an event to help organisations working with vulnerable people to prepare for the forthcoming Housing (Wales) Act.

Due to be introduced in April 2015, Wales' first ever Housing Act will see a reform of homelessness law, placing a stronger duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness.

With one eye firmly on the new legislation, the Symposium brought together speakers and delegates from across the UK to discuss policy, practice and innovation in homelessness provision and prevention.

In a video address to the conference, Lesley Griffiths, the new Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, recognised the importance of the Housing (Wales) Act, hailing it as 'the most important reform for housing legislation in 40 years', and acknowledged the important role the sector has to play in implementing the legislation to its full effect.

The Minister also emphasised that reducing homelessness is a key priority for both her and the Welsh Government and signalled her commitment to continuing to build closer links between homelessness services and the Supporting People Programme.

Opening the event, Auriol Miller, Director of Cymorth Cymru, said 'We are delighted to welcome speakers and delegates from across the UK to today's event – it's a great opportunity to compare and contrast how policy is developing differently across the nations, share good practice and explore new and different ways of working with vulnerable and at risk individuals.'

Auriol also emphasised that Cymorth welcomes the new housing legislation, in particular 'the emphasis on preventative work and the extra £4.9m going into Homelessness to prepare for the new prevention duty.'

However, she also voiced concerns about the proposed additional cuts to Supporting People services and the potential impact this could have 'on the lives of already vulnerable people who risk being pushed even further to the margins of our society.'

Almost 100 people attended the symposium which took place in Cardiff City Stadium. Speakers at the event included Homeless Link, Homeless Action Scotland, Council for the Homeless Northern Ireland, Action for Children and Shelter Cymru.

Ends

Notes to editor

1. Cymorth Cymru is the umbrella body for organisations working with vulnerable people in Wales. Our members assist people to find and keep a home and build the life they aspire to, working with people who are vulnerable, isolated or experiencing housing crisis. www.cymorthcymru.org.uk
2. The [Supporting People Programme](#) provides housing-related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. It supports people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness; families fleeing domestic abuse; people dealing with mental or physical health problems or learning disabilities; ex-service personnel; care leavers and other vulnerable young people; and older people in need of support.
3. The Housing (Wales) Bill received Royal Assent on 17 September 2014 and formally became the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. [Find out more about the Act](#)

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