

Proposed cuts to 'essential safety net' for vulnerable people are 'counter-productive' says Auriol Miller, Cymorth Cymru Director

1st October 2014

Following yesterday's announcement of the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2015/16, Cymorth Cymru has expressed its disappointment at the news that the Supporting People Programme is facing cuts of nearly £10million. This is almost double what had previously been indicated by the WG in last December's indicative budget. This means a cut of 7.4% on what is currently a £134m budget, described yesterday as a 'small but essential' budget line.

Auriol Miller, Director of Cymorth Cymru, commented: *'Last year, we were delighted when the Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Liberal Democrats recognised the essential value of the Supporting People programme and demonstrated its commitment to provide relative protection to some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in our communities.'*

Whilst we acknowledge that the Welsh Government has had some very difficult decisions to make in regards to funding and budgets, we are extremely disappointed to learn that the difference is so marked between last December's indicative figures and those published yesterday. This nearly £10m cut will impact on some of the most disadvantaged and at risk people in Wales who often fall through the cracks of statutory services.

Supporting People is an essential safety net which contributes to reducing unnecessary demand on high-cost statutory services such as A&E, in-patient admission, homelessness services, and the criminal justice system. SP services also play a crucial role in providing disadvantaged and at risk people – whose voices are rarely heard – with the vital practical support to live independent, fulfilled lives.

In the current economic and social climate, further cuts to the Supporting People budget is counter-productive and will result in greater long-term costs to both local and central government.

We would like to see December's final budget figures for Supporting People be closer to the 4.4% cut previously published in the indicative budget. Cymorth Cymru and our members will be doing all we can to achieve this on behalf of the already disadvantaged people our members support.

We acknowledge and commend the cross-party support for SP so we urge party leaders and Committee members to ensure the continued delivery of essential services at a time when these are needed the most.'

The Supporting People Programme supports more than **56,000** people each year, including 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.

ENDS

Notes

1. The [Supporting People Programme](#) is specifically focused on housing-related support, homelessness and supported living services. Types of services include sheltered accommodation for older people; refuges for women and men fleeing domestic abuse; supported housing; hostel accommodation; floating support delivered to people living in the community; and extra care schemes.
2. See [3 Reasons to Protect the Supporting People Programme Grant](#) for more information on the benefits and cost savings of SP
3. In Newport, £140,856 was saved by [Solus Family Intervention Project](#) successfully sustaining the tenancies of 14 families who were at risk of homelessness or eviction
4. A [report by Torfaen County Borough Council](#) showed that a combined saving of at least £1940 to Health and Social Care could be achieved through support delivered to just one service user.
5. 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

Media contact

Jodi Cox, Communications & Marketing Manager, Cymorth Cymru
t: 029 2055 3687, e: jodicox@cymorthcymru.org.uk