

Cymorth Cymru responds to Wales Audit Office report about the Welsh Government's management of the Supporting People Programme

The Wales Audit Office has today published a report about the Welsh Government's management of the Supporting People Programme. The report can be downloaded [here](#) and makes a series of recommendations, which are detailed below.

Cymorth Cymru will be studying the report in detail and working with our colleagues in CHC, WLGA and Welsh Government to address the issues raised by the Wales Audit Office.

Katie Dalton, Director of Cymorth Cymru, said:

"We are pleased that the Auditor General recognises that the Supporting People Programme **'provides important support to those who need it the most'**. As the Welsh Government develops its budget for 2018/19, **we urge Ministers to show leadership and protect SP funding** so that it can continue to transform the lives of 60,000 vulnerable people each year.

"We welcome the report's recommendation that **the Welsh Government should re-introduce indicative three year funding allocations**, as the current annual funding cycle results in uncertainty and instability, limiting both local authorities and providers' ability to plan for the long term. Although we recognise the financial constraints on Ministers, we believe that **supporting vulnerable people to avoid homelessness and live independently should be a priority** and given longer term assurances."

"It is important to recognise that **this report does not criticise the services provided by the many dedicated staff across Wales**, but makes a series of points about the governance and management of the programme.

"We welcome recommendations to provide **more clarity, consistency and certainty about government priorities, procurement processes and data collection**. I frequently speak to people using these services and know that it transforms and saves lives. We are committed to working with our members and the Welsh Government to demonstrate this impact.

"The Wales Audit Office is right to recognise the ongoing threats of welfare reform, particularly the UK Government's plans to apply the Local Housing Allowance rate to supported accommodation. **We urge the UK Government to abandon these plans**, which put the viability of supported accommodation projects at risk."

BBC Radio Wales interviews

Cymorth Director Katie Dalton appeared on BBC Radio Wales this morning to discuss the Wales Audit Office report and the impact of Supporting People services on people's lives. You can listen to the interview at 00:36:30 into the Good Morning Wales programme [here](#):

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b092qh4t>

A representative of the Wales Audit Office also appeared on BBC Radio Wales this morning, agreeing with many of Cymorth's points about Supporting People services. You can listen to his interview at 01:36:30 into the programme.

Wales Audit Office recommendations

The Wales Audit Office report makes the following recommendations:

- We recommend that the Welsh Government should re-introduce indicative three-year Supporting People funding allocations at the earliest opportunity to assist local authorities in their planning; and consider the merits of moving to three-year annual rolling local authority spend plans
- We recommend that the Welsh Government review whether the Regional Collaborative Committee arrangements remain fit for purpose in the context of other collaborative governance arrangements, such as the new statutory public service boards and its wider plans for regional working in local government.
- We recommend that, once it has finalised the new strategic objectives for the Programme, the Welsh Government prioritise developing a new funding formula to redistribute funding in a way that most effectively delivers those objectives.
- We recommend that the Welsh Government's ongoing reviews of local authorities' management of the Programme should examine whether contracts are being extended in accordance with Public Contract Regulations; and in revising its Programme guidance, the Welsh Government redraft its advice on contract procurement to avoid the scope for any misinterpretation about when to retender for services, and to clearly articulate the rules around contract extensions.
- We recommend that the Welsh Government should identify and clearly communicate the implications of welfare reforms for the Programme.
- We recommend that the Welsh Government work with local authorities to examine in more detail whether there are significant variations in the costs of delivering Supporting People services of a similar type and duration.
- We recommend that the Welsh Government work with its partners to ensure that, once introduced, any new arrangements for outcome data collection are clearly understood by providers and embedded as part of contractual arrangements.
- We recommend that the Welsh Government encourage all Regional Collaborative Committees to review arrangements for support for people with learning disabilities through the Programme and work with the committees to manage any potential negative consequences for service provision.