

# Frontline Network Wales: Year 1

Established in September 2020, the Frontline Network Wales has been up and running for one year. During this time it has ensured that frontline homelessness and housing support workers' views have been heard and responded to during the COVID-19 pandemic. This short report provides a summary of the Network's activities and how it has influenced policy.

## Frontline Network Wales launch event

- Launched in December 2020
- Online event attended by nearly 200 people
- Speech from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, who also answered questions from frontline workers
- Video message from Michael Sheen



## How it works

- Online regional meet-ups held quarterly, using the same footprint as the Housing Support Grant regions:
  - North Wales
  - Mid and West Wales
  - West Glamorgan
  - Cwm Taf Morgannwg
  - Vale and Cardiff
  - Gwent

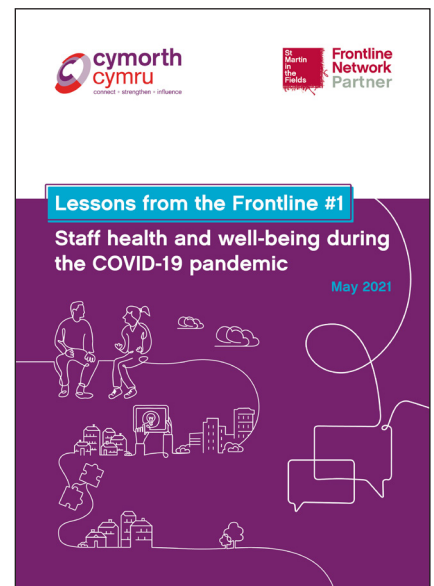


## First round of meet-ups

- February 2021 - focused on staff health and well-being
- 50 attendees across 5 online meet-ups
- On average, attendees rated the events 8.8 out of 10

## Lessons from the Frontline #1: Staff health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Report produced including recommendations for service providers, commissioners and the Welsh Government
- Themes included:
  - The pandemic has affected us all differently
  - There have been both positives and negatives
  - Flexibility has been welcomed
  - Permission and assurance from managers re: looking after staff wellbeing is really important
  - Strong networks and teams are key

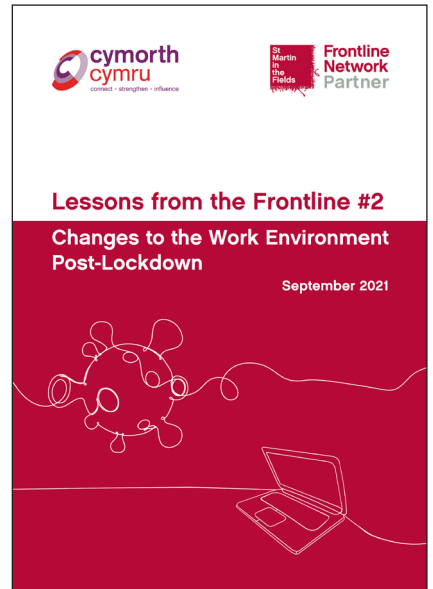


## Second round of meet-ups

- April / May 2021 - focused on changes to the work environment as COVID restrictions eased
- 56 attendees across 6 online meet-ups
- On average, attendees rated the events 9.0 out of 10

## Lessons from the Frontline #2: Changes to the Work Environment Post-Lockdown

- Report produced including recommendations for services, commissioners, Welsh Government, Public Health Wales
- Themes included:
  - Mixed experiences of returning to the office
  - Varying levels of consultation with frontline workers
  - No going back - want to retain flexibility and hybrid models
  - Importance of space and connectivity
  - Remote working was particularly difficult for new staff



**“It is encouraging to meet with like-minded workers who are all experiencing similar issues and to know we aren’t lone voices in the wilderness - we have Cymorth to take issues to Welsh Government.”**

## Third round of meet-ups

- June / July 2021 - focused on what frontline workers want from the new Welsh Government
- 62 attendees across 6 online meet-ups
- On average, attendees rated the events 9.3 out of 10
- Report currently being drafted - and will be sent to Welsh Government and Members of the Senedd

## Fourth round of meet-ups

- September 2021 - focused on what frontline workers want from the new Welsh Government
- Conversations with Members of the Senedd
  - Plaid Cymru: Heledd Fychan, Mabon ap Gwynfor, Sioned Williams, Peredur Owen Griffiths
  - Welsh Labour: Jenny Rathbone, Jack Sargeant, John Griffiths
  - Welsh Conservatives: Joel James, Altaf Hussain
- Included Shadow Housing and Planning Minister and the Chairs of the Senedd Finance Committee and the Local Government and Housing Committee
- 70 attendees across 4 online events

**Calling all frontline homelessness and housing support workers...**

Join us for the latest Frontline Network Wales regional meet-ups, where you'll have the chance to share your views and hear from your Members of the Senedd.




**cymorth cymru** connect - strengthen - influence

**St Martin in the Fields**

**Frontline Network Partner**





Recognised  
as key workers  
and included in  
vaccine priority  
group 2

## Influencing the Welsh Government

Throughout the last year we have been listening to frontline workers' views and experiences during our quarterly meet-ups and raising these issues with the Welsh Government and other decision makers. As a result, we have successfully campaigned for:

- Recognition of homelessness and housing support workers as **'key workers'** and therefore qualification for **PPE** and **childcare** places.
- Inclusion of homelessness and housing support workers in the Welsh Government's **Statutory Sick Pay Enhancement Scheme** to support workers during the pandemic.
- Inclusion of homelessness and housing support workers in **vaccine priority group 2**.
- Inclusion in the second iteration of the Welsh Government's **£500 financial recognition scheme**.
- Commitment from the new Welsh Government to include homelessness and housing support workers in the **living wage commitment** for social care workers.
- Increase to the Housing Support Grant of **£40million** in the 2021/22 Welsh budget and pay increases for many workers for the first time in years.

Included  
in Statutory  
Sick Pay  
Enhancement  
Scheme

£40m  
increase in  
the Housing  
Support Grant  
for 2021/22

Included in  
2nd iteration  
of financial  
recognition  
scheme

**A huge thank you to everyone who participated in our Frontline Network Wales events this year!**

“I felt that my opinion mattered and that I was listened to and action may be taken.”

“You feel that your views are being listened to and will be taken on board. Makes me feel that my opinions are valued.”