

# Ending Homelessness Outcomes Framework

## Welsh Government consultation

### A response from Cymorth Cymru

18th September 2023

#### About Cymorth Cymru:

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**Cymorth Cymru is the representative body for providers of homelessness, housing and support services in Wales. We act as the voice of the sector, influencing the development and implementation of policy, legislation and practice that affects our members and the people they support.**

Our members provide a wide range of services that support people to overcome tough times, rebuild their confidence and live independently in their own homes. This includes people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, young people and care leavers, older people, people fleeing violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence, people living with a learning disability, people experiencing mental health problems, people with substance misuse issues and many more.

We want to be part of a social movement that ends homelessness and creates a Wales where everyone can live safely and independently in their own homes and thrive in their communities. We are committed to working with people who use services, our members and partners to effect change. We believe that together, we can have a greater impact on people's lives.

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## Introduction

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- 1.1 Cymorth was an active member of the Welsh Government task and finish group that contributed to the development of this outcomes framework, participating in numerous meetings over a period of several months. Co-production was at the heart of this process, with key stakeholders working alongside data experts, academics, Welsh Government policy officials, and Welsh Government research officials to consider the appropriate structure and content.
- 1.2 As the representative body for providers of homelessness and housing support, the coordinator of the Frontline Network Wales, and an organisation that has been working closely with people who have lived experience, we have tried to reflect the views of all three of these groups in our contributions to the task and finish group and this consultation.
- 1.3 We are passionate about ending homelessness in Wales and extremely keen that this outcomes framework becomes a tool to measure progress against the Ending Homelessness Action Plan. This has been at the forefront of our mind throughout this process and it is important that the framework enables key stakeholders, the public, and the Senedd to scrutinise delivery and hold the Welsh Government to account.

### Question 1: Based on the key principles of the framework, to what extent do you agree the above areas are the right strategic focus for the framework?

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- 1.4 **Strongly agree.**
- 1.5 The task and finish group considered hundreds of outcomes and indicators during this process, but we feel confident that the resulting six strategic outcomes are the right ones and align with the key principles for the framework.
- 1.6 **Rare, brief and non-repeated:** These strategic outcomes reflect the Welsh Government's definition of ending homelessness in the Ending Homelessness Action Plan, which we fully support. In our view, it is absolutely essential to have outcomes and indicators that reflect these three elements of the definition.
- 1.7 **Workforce:** We strongly argued for '*A resilient and valued homelessness and housing support workforce recognised for their expertise*' to be included as one of the six strategic outcomes. Our members are clear that this outcome is absolutely critical if we are to make progress towards ending homelessness. The homelessness and housing support workforce is our greatest asset: they provide incredible support that helps to prevent homelessness and support people on their recovery from homelessness, mental health crises, addiction issues, family breakdown and much more. It is important to recognise that the funding challenges of the last decade have put immense pressure on the workforce, driving down wages and making recruitment and retention extremely difficult. Unless the workforce feels valued and is truly recognised and rewarded for their skill and expertise, we will not be able to end homelessness. We cannot overstate the importance of including this as one of the six strategic outcomes. This will, however, require investment and an increase in the Housing Support Grant.
- 1.8 **Public service response:** We fully support the strategic outcome focused on public services, as homelessness cannot be ended by housing alone. We have heard countless accounts from people with lived experience and support providers about the important role that services such as health can play in preventing and responding to homelessness – and how much improvement needs to be made. It is essential that other public services play their part in our ambition to end homelessness – and this framework should play a critical role in holding public services and other parts of the Welsh Government to account.

- 1.9 **Person centred:** This strategic outcome was one of the most difficult to define, but a person-centred approach is critical to the delivery of the strategy, which centres the voices of people with lived experience and ensures equitable access and outcomes. The views of people with lived experience are essential to assess progress against the action plan, and they should continue to be involved in shaping policy and practice.

**Question 2a: Are there any additional detailed outcomes that you think should be included?**

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1.10 No

**Question 2b: Are there any proposed detailed outcomes that you think should be excluded?**

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1.11 No

**Question 2c: Are there any proposed detailed outcomes that can be improved?**

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- 1.12 We have the following feedback on the detailed outcomes and their indicators:
- 1.13 **Rare 2(a):** As well as the number of people given assistance, this indicator should also record the proportion who had a successful outcome (i.e. homelessness prevented or ended)
- 1.14 **Rare 6(c):** We believe this should be the number of homeless households on the social housing waiting list (there are non-homeless households on the social housing waiting list).
- 1.15 **Brief 1(b):** This might be more meaningful as a proportion of the total numbers in temporary accommodation, rather than the total number without any other context.
- 1.16 **Brief 3(a):** We don't think this indicator reflects the detailed outcome as it doesn't relate to co-ordinated multi-agency support and doesn't appear to be a particularly good fit for 'Brief'.
- 1.17 **Brief 3 – suggested new indicators:** However, we believe that the following indicators from the Housing Support Grant secondary outcomes can be used to evidence the co-ordinated, multi-agency support referenced in detailed outcome 3:
- HSG secondary outcome 3: I am positively engaging with support
  - HSG secondary outcome 5: I can access the health services I need for my physical health
  - HSG secondary outcome 6: I can access the support I need to help me to manage my dependency / use
  - HSG Secondary outcome 7: I can access the mental health services I need
- 1.18 **Unrepeated 2 – suggested new indicators:** We believe the following Housing Support Grant secondary outcome could be an indicator for this detailed outcome:
- HSG secondary outcome 3: I am positively engaging with support
  - HSG secondary outcome 3: I have the practical skills to live independently
- 1.19 **Workforce:** We will continue to work with the Welsh Government on the development and promotion of an annual workforce survey.
- 1.20 **Public service response 1:** We believe that some of the HSG secondary outcomes could be used as indicators for part of detailed outcome 1 that relates to people having 'access to the support they need':
- HSG secondary outcome 5: I can access the health services I need for my physical health
  - HSG secondary outcome 6: I can access the support I need to help me to manage my dependency / use
  - HSG secondary outcome 7: I can access the mental health services I need

- 1.21 **Public service response 1:** The second part of this detailed outcome, relating to people being ‘treated with dignity and respect’ would need to be gathered by directly engaging with people who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness.
- 1.22 **Person centred 3:** In addition to engaging directly with people who have experience of homelessness, further evidence could be collected by asking each local authority or HSG region to report on how they have involved people with lived experience.

### **Question 3: To what extent does the outcomes framework adequately help to measure progress against this overarching goal?**

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#### **1.23 Agree**

- 1.24 We agree that outcomes framework, as drafted, should help to measure progress against the goal related to equalities. However, the Welsh Government must ensure that equality and diversity data is collected by all relevant bodies and this is not viewed as an optional extra.
- 1.25 Rare detailed outcome 2, if collected effectively, should demonstrate whether people from marginalised groups are disproportionately affected by homelessness. If this does occur, there needs to be mechanisms to act on those inequalities at a national and/or local level.
- 1.26 With regards to the Person Centred strategic outcome, it may be worth considering additional data indicators that reflect each of the other strategic outcomes. For example, there could be an indicator taken from each of Rare, Brief, Unrepeated and Public Service Response – that could be broken down by marginalised or disadvantaged groups.

### **Question 4: In respect of experience of repeat homelessness, what do you consider to be an appropriate timeframe to capture data for a household who has received a relief duty, and then (within X months) submitted a further homeless application?**

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- 1.27 We don’t have a definite position on this, but we would prefer it to be twelve months.
- 1.28 Our view is that having a home for twelve months or more represents a settled period, and any repeat homelessness within this time would imply a failure in the system. Six months seems too short. Therefore, twelve months is our preference.
- 1.29 Twelve months would also appear to align with the minimum period of time someone can hold a standard contract under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016. A no fault eviction notice can only be served after the first six months of occupation and comes with a six-month notice period. This means that a contract-holder who does not breach the terms of their contract is entitled to occupy for a minimum of one year from the occupation date.

### **Question 5a: Detailed Outcome 3 - People can access the right home in the right place.**

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- 1.30 We are comfortable with the three categories outlined in these indicators (a), (b) and (c).
- 1.31 However, we question whether indicator (d) is appropriate for ‘Unrepeated’ as it refers to whole population data (from the National Wellbeing of Wales survey) rather than specifically being focused on people who have previously experienced homelessness, which is what ‘Unrepeated’ should be focused on.
- 1.32 We believe that this set of indicators could be strengthened to reflect whether people who have previously experienced or been at risk of homelessness feel that they have the right home in the right place. We have suggestions for additional indicators which can be taken from the Housing Support Grant secondary outcomes in relation to community connections and feeling safe:

- HSG secondary outcome 1: I don't feel isolated
- HSG secondary outcome 1: I feel connected to my local community
- HSG secondary outcome 2: I feel safe in my home from any physical harm
- HSG secondary outcome 2: I feel safe in my home from any emotional harm

### Question 5b: To what extent do you agree with this 6 month timeframe?

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1.33 We would argue that the timeframe should be twelve months, for the reasons outlined in our answer to consultation question 4.

### Question 6a. What do you consider to be a suitable timeframe to measure long-term homelessness?

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1.34 For this indicator, we suggest aligning it with definitions that have been adopted elsewhere.

1.35 The [Homeless Hub](#) in Canada defines chronic homelessness as 'individuals who are homeless for a year or more'.

1.36 Twelve months is referenced in definitions by the [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) and the US Department for of [Housing and Urban Development](#).

### Question 6b: What do you consider to be a suitable timeframe to measure long-term street homelessness?

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1.37 Again, we wonder whether it might be better to align the timeframe with definitions used elsewhere. The Ending Rough Sleeping [indicators](#) used in England, which was developed with the Centre for Homeless Impact.

***Number of people experiencing long-term rough sleeping***

*Individuals will meet the criteria for this indicator if they have been seen recently (within the reporting month), and have also been seen out in 3 or more months out of the last 12 months.*

### Question 7: Are there any current data indicators which exist you would like to make us aware of relating to the wider public service response?

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1.38 As a member of the Expert Review Panel on legislative reform, we are aware of the recommendations being made by the panel to place new duties on public services. If these are taken forward into legislation, we believe that new indicators relating to these duties should be developed and incorporated into the outcomes framework.

### Questions 8/9: Welsh language

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1.39 Firstly, consideration should be given to how we ensure that Welsh speakers' views and experiences are fully represented in the outcomes framework. In particular, consideration should be given to how we can identify any inequalities in experiences or outcomes, possibly through Person Centred detailed outcome 2.

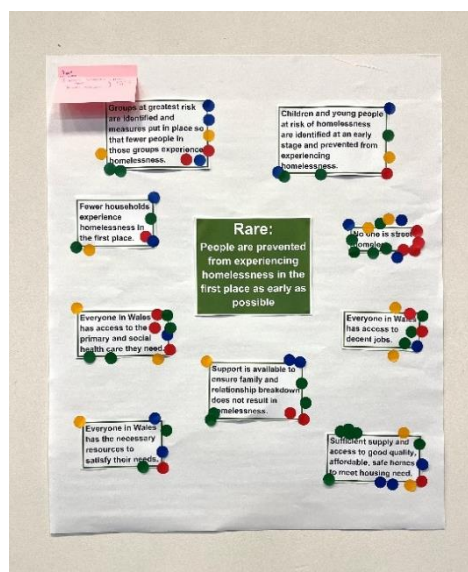
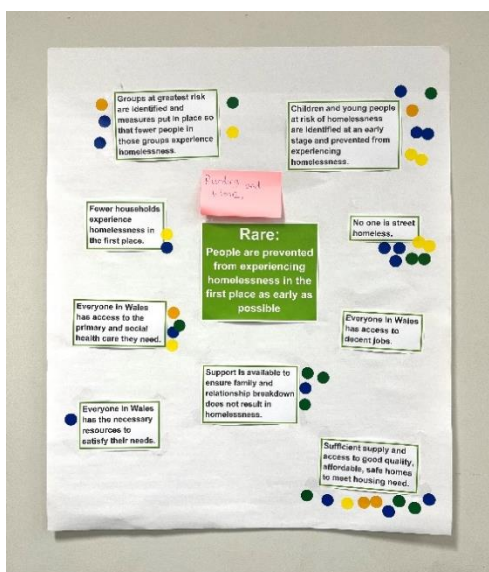
1.40 Further consideration could also be given to whether there should be an additional indicator that relates to whether Welsh speakers can access the right home in the right place. We know that second homes and holiday lets are having an impact on the housing market in particular communities in Wales, and that some of these are areas with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers. This may mean that Welsh speakers who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness are unable to find a home in Welsh speaking communities, affecting their ability to find the right house in the right place.

## Feedback from Experts by Experience

On 31<sup>st</sup> August and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, we held two engagement events with people who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness. Welsh Government policy officials from the homelessness prevention team attended both of these events, delivering a presentation about the Ending Homelessness Outcomes Framework and answering questions from attendees. People with lived experience were introduced to each strategic outcome and then invited to vote on the proposed detailed outcomes, using one vote to indicate their support and two votes to indicate that they thought the outcome was especially important. They were also invited to give feedback or suggestions for further consideration on post-it notes. Everyone engaged positively with this exercise and many people contributed their views and shared their experiences with Cymorth staff, Welsh Government officials and other attendees.

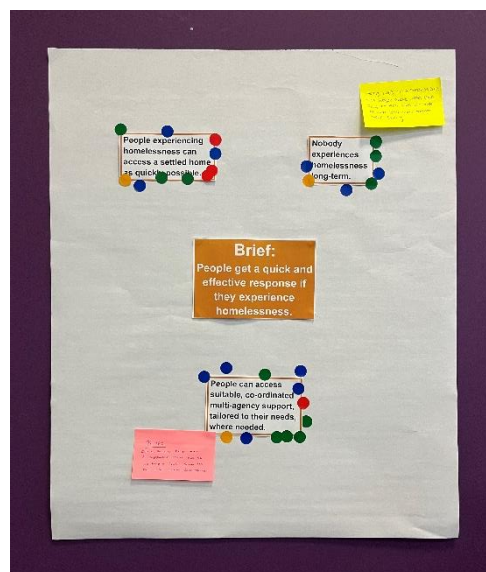
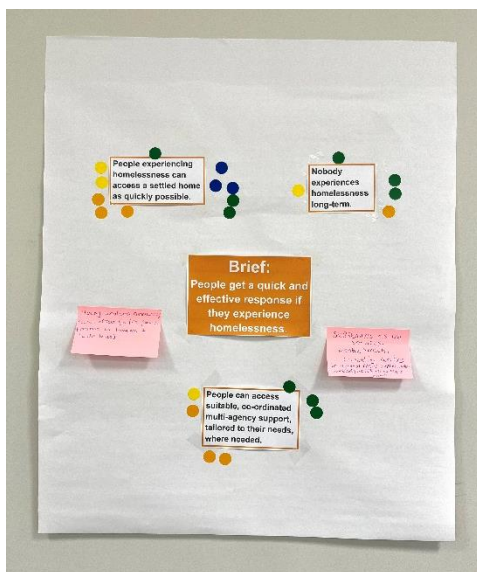
### 1. Rare

- 1.1 There was widespread support for the majority of the nine detailed outcomes under 'Rare'.
- 1.2 In Cardiff, the most popular detailed outcome was '**sufficient supply and access to good quality, affordable, safe homes to meet housing need**' and the least popular was 'everyone in Wales has access to decent jobs'. The detailed outcomes with the lowest votes were those associated with universal, upstream prevention. This may be because the people at this event had recently experienced homelessness and felt more strongly about the types of prevention that would have had a clear and obvious impact on their experiences.
- 1.3 In Conwy there were lots of votes for each detailed outcome, with the most popular being '**no-one is street homeless**', followed by '**sufficient supply and access to good quality, affordable, safe homes to meet housing need**'.
- 1.4 Two people left additional comments, and these were:
  - "**Funding and time**" – This person felt that there needed to be more funding for homelessness and housing support services and for there to be more time for support staff to work with people using services. This points to current challenges with staffing capacity and the need for people to be able to engage with support at their own pace, in order for prevention to be effective.
  - "**Domestic violence and sexual violence need looking at**" – This person had survived domestic abuse and wanted VAWDASV survivors to be recognised as one of the groups at greatest risk of homelessness in the detailed outcome related to targeted prevention.



## 2. Brief

- 2.1 There was strong support at both events for all three detailed outcomes under 'brief'.
- 2.2 In Cardiff, the most popular detailed outcome was **'People experiencing homelessness can access a settled home as quickly as possible'**.
- 2.3 In Conwy, the most popular detailed outcome was **'People can access suitable, co-ordinated, multi-agency support, tailored to their needs'**.
- 2.4 Again, these two detailed outcomes resonated with people's recent or ongoing experiences and needs. All were looking for an affordable home and were struggling to do so within a reasonable time. Many attendees also had experience of trying to access a range of public services to help them to overcome crises and challenges, and therefore had strong views on the role of multi-agency support.
- 2.5 Additional comments included:
  - **"Having localised community council offices."** – This comment implied local offices would help people to access housing and support more quickly, thus making their homelessness as brief as possible.
  - **"Substance misuse services, mental health, counselling services incorporated after support when someone moves into their home."** – This person highlighted the importance of multi-agency support, and for this to continue after they move into their home.
  - **"Being left in a homeless B&B and forgot about and then told to pick areas outside of where you want, nowhere near family."** – This comment shows the importance of the indicators in this section of the outcomes framework related to time in temporary accommodation, and also links to another detailed outcome under 'Unrepeated', which focuses on the right home in the right place.
  - **"Can't access help from 2 [support providers] due to being funded from same pot but need both companies."** – This comment was from someone who had experienced a number of challenges and would have liked to access two different housing support providers who had different specialities. However, she was unable to do so because she couldn't be a client of both at the same time, due to both services being funded by the Housing Support Grant. This struck her and her support worker as being an unnecessary barrier to getting joined up, multi-agency support.

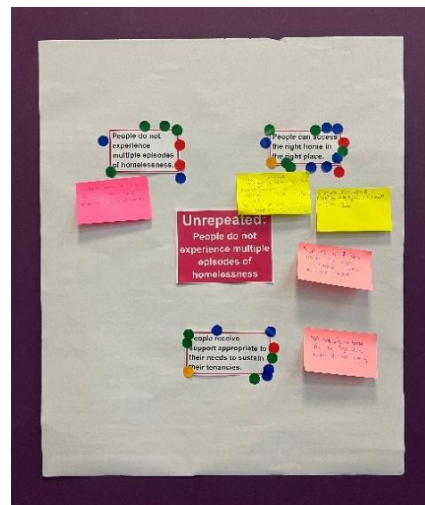
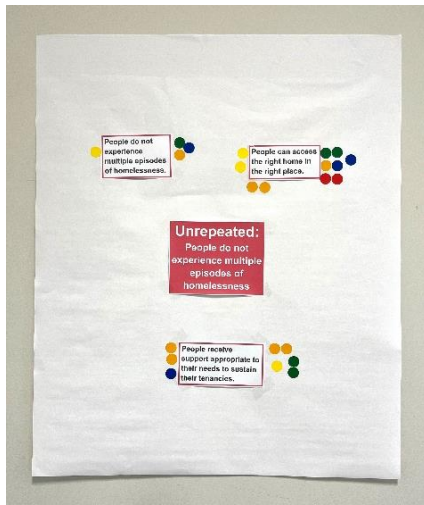


### 3. Unrepeated

3.1 There was support at both engagement events for all of the detailed outcomes under 'Unrepeated'. However, the most popular detailed outcome at both events was **'People can access the right home in the right place'**. As mentioned above, this was reinforced by a comment from the previous discussion which related to being told to choose accommodation away from family.

3.2 A number of people left comments related to this strategic outcome:

- *"When moved away because of DV people still need family support, to see children etc. So should be taken into consideration [when] rehoused."*
- *"Emergency accommodation could be anywhere initially, but then should be chosen area."*
- *"Lack of 4-bed houses for larger families with additional needs."*
- *"Accommodation suitable for the size and needs of the family."*

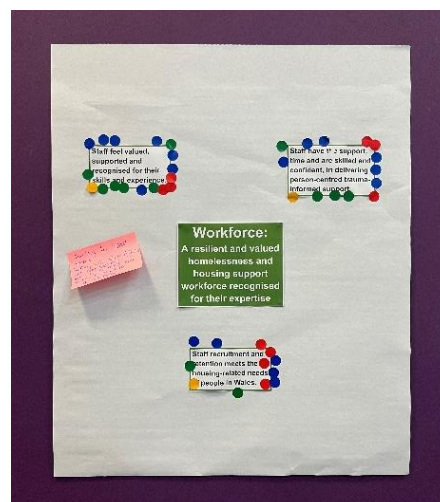


### 4. Workforce

4.1 Although there was support for all three detailed outcomes, in both Cardiff and Conwy the most popular was **'Staff feel valued, supported and recognised for their skills and experience'**.

4.2 This reflected the value that many of the attendees placed upon the support they had received and the skills, compassion and expertise of their support workers.

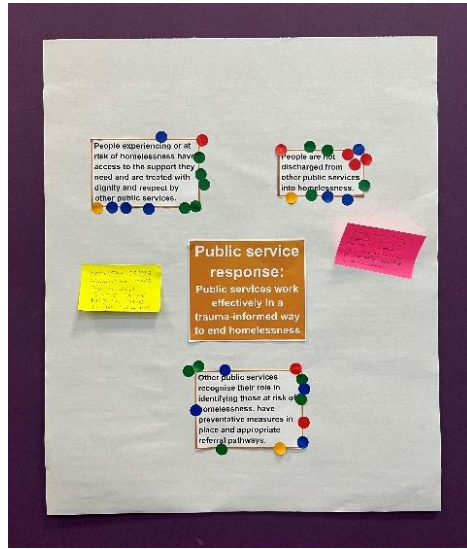
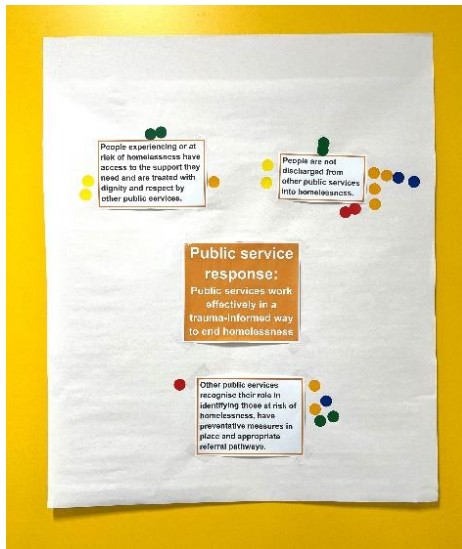
- *"Fair pay for support workers. Working with other professions that rely heavily on input, writing reports and have to deliver for a lot less money."*





## 5. Public services

- 5.1 In Cardiff, the most popular detailed outcome was **‘People are not discharged from other public services into homelessness’**.
- 5.2 In Conwy, all three outcomes were very popular and received a similar number of votes.
- 5.3 Comments left by participants included:
- *“Homeless people shouldn’t have to commit crime to get the help they need to get clean.”*
  - *“People moving into supported housing still need equal access to other services. [Supported housing staff] aren’t necessarily specialists in these areas.”*



## 6. Person centred

- 6.1 Again, all three detailed outcomes received support from attendees at both the Cardiff and Conwy engagement events. They were each allocated similar numbers of votes, despite being very different, which shows the importance of retaining all three detailed outcomes.
- 6.2 Additional comments left by participants included:
- *“Getting told you can’t stay out for a few nights when the person needed some company from people they know getting told their room will be took off them!!!”*
  - *“Need more legislation / controls over temporary accommodation, Stop just throwing money at shoddy providers. Very poor quality 20 room hotel getting over £2m a year.”*

