

HOME



A MANIFESTO



INTRODUCTION

Everyone should have a safe place to call home and the right support to thrive in their communities.

However, too many people in Wales are currently facing homelessness and housing insecurity, with nearly 11,000 people in temporary accommodation, and over 90,000 households on social housing waiting lists. The experience of homelessness can be deeply traumatic, leaving its mark on people's lives for many years to come, affecting their health, education and employment. It also places a significant strain on public services, including sky-rocketing temporary accommodation costs and avoidable pressures on health services. It is in everybody's interest to prevent homelessness, and the next Welsh Government has a critical role to play in making sure it is rare, brief and unrepeatable.

Over the last two decades, there has been strong cross-party support across the Senedd for funding, policies and legislation to tackle homelessness. We have been pleased to work with representatives from all of the political parties who share our passion for ensuring that people have the right home, in the right place, with the right support. Progress on funding and legislation during this Senedd term has provided us with a solid foundation, but there is much more to do if we are to realise the ambition of ending homelessness.

During the last few months we have engaged with our member organisations, frontline workers and people with lived experience, to develop our priorities for the next Welsh Government.

We hope you can join us in supporting these actions to ensure that everyone has a safe place to call home and the right support to thrive in their communities.



Katie Dalton
Director, Cymorth Cymru

ABOUT CYMORTH CYMRU

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. We have around 80 member organisations that 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.

OUR PRIORITIES

**A STRATEGIC, CROSS-GOVERNMENT
COMMITMENT TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS**

**INCREASED FUNDING FOR HOMELESSNESS
AND HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES**

**A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN SOCIAL
HOUSING SUPPLY, ALIGNED WITH NEED**

**GREATER RECOGNITION FOR HOMELESSNESS
AND HOUSING SUPPORT WORKERS**

**AMBITIOUS TARGETS FOR EXPANDING
HOUSING FIRST ACROSS WALES**

**A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR LEARNING
DISABILITY SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES**

**A STRATEGIC COMMITMENT TO PRIORITISE
INCLUSION HEALTH**

A STRATEGIC CROSS-GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS

During the current Senedd term, there has been a welcome focus on homelessness, with the publication of the Ending Homelessness Action Plan, increased funding for homelessness services, and the development of the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill. However, there is much more to do if we want everyone to have a safe place to call home.

- **A cross-government priority:** Over the last few years, there has been widespread recognition that homelessness is not just a housing issue, but a public services issue, requiring all parts of government to play their part in preventing it. The next Welsh Government should make homelessness a cross-government priority, including in the annual budget process, ensuring that all public services play their part in universal and targeted prevention.
- **A new action plan:** The current Ending Homelessness Action Plan enabled important work to be undertaken on outcomes, rapid rehousing, the homelessness workforce, and inclusion health. The next Welsh Government should publish a new action plan with a renewed focus on ending homelessness, with actions for all relevant government departments.
- **Continuing the transition to rapid rehousing:** The best way to end homelessness is by preventing it from occurring in the first place. However, when it does occur, we want it to be as brief as possible. A rapid rehousing approach aims to do exactly this, by minimising the amount of time in temporary accommodation, and moving people into a settled home with the right support as quickly as possible. Wales has made positive steps to rapid rehousing over the last few years, but the next Welsh Government needs to ensure that local authorities and their partners receive the necessary resources and support to continue this journey.
- **Supporting implementation of the Homelessness Bill:** At the time of writing, the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill has made its way through the Senedd's legislative process and is awaiting Royal Assent. This is a ground-breaking piece of legislation and the next Welsh Government needs to provide the resources and support to ensure that implementation goes as smoothly as possible and it has the greatest possible impact.



5-level homelessness prevention typology

(Prof. Suzanne Fitzpatrick and Prof. Peter Mackie)

- **Universal:** Preventing homelessness risk across the population as a whole, including poverty reduction, affordable housing, employment and welfare.
- **Targeted:** Early intervention focusing on people and places at the highest risk of homelessness e.g. people leaving prison, young people leaving care
- **Crisis:** Short-term response needed for people at imminent risk of homelessness.
- **Emergency:** People at immediate, including same-day, risk of rooflessness or homelessness.
- **Repeat:** Working with people who have previously been homeless to prevent the experience being repeated.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

Homelessness and housing support services are critical for preventing and alleviating homelessness. They provide vital advice and support to ensure people can stay in their homes, as well as helping people out of homelessness through the provision of Housing First, refuge and supported accommodation.

These services are life-changing and often life-saving, as well as delivering a significant cost-benefit to public services through reduced pressure on health services, social care and the criminal justice system. However, these services have been underfunded for many years, and recent increases in demand and the complexity of support needs means that more funding is required during the next Senedd term.

While increases to the Housing Support Grant budget in 2024/25 and 2025/26 were warmly welcomed, inflationary pressures mean that current funding levels are no higher than in 2012. This creates an extremely challenging environment for services providers, with a recent Cymorth Cymru survey showing that 66% of homelessness and housing support providers are running commissioned services at a deficit, with 60% relying on their reserves to top-up insufficient local authority funding. 86% of providers reported an increase in demand for their services compared to the previous year, with 97% reporting an increase in the complexity of people's support needs.

The next Welsh Government needs to ensure that these services receive the funding they need to continue to deliver this vital work, including:

- Increasing Housing Support Grant and Homelessness Prevention Grant funding to ensure that all commissioned services are fully-funded and able to meet local demand and the increasing complexity of support needs.
- Providing enough funding to ensure appropriate staffing ratios, fair wages for frontline workers, and high quality support for staff to deal with the challenges and trauma of their jobs.
- Maintain the funding ringfence and provide multi-year budget settlements, with a guaranteed year-on year inflationary uplift as a minimum, to give services and frontline staff the security and stability they need.

Housing Support Grant (HSG) and Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG)

The HSG and HPG fund the majority of homelessness prevention and support services in Wales, including the national housing advice service, tenancy support, supported accommodation, domestic abuse refuges, and Housing First. These services play a key role in preventing and alleviating homelessness.

Financial impact of housing support services

Research conducted by Cardiff Metropolitan University found that every £1 invested in homelessness and housing support services delivers £1.40 net savings to public services in Wales.

Based on the current £204m Housing Support Grant budget, this translates to a total gross saving of £495m, with £229m to the health service, £199m to social care services and £79m to criminal justice services.



A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPLY, ALIGNED WITH NEED

Increasing the supply of social homes is critical to the ambition to end homelessness. With an estimated 90,000 people on the social housing waiting list and nearly 11,000 people in temporary accommodation, the need has never been greater. While services are doing their best to provide high-quality, trauma-informed, and person-centred support, the lack of truly affordable housing prevents them from solving the fundamental problem that too many people do not have a safe place to call home.

We strongly supported the Welsh Government's ambition to deliver an additional 20,000 social homes during this Senedd term, particularly the change in focus from 'affordable' to 'social' housing. We warmly welcomed the £2billion investment in social housing funding, and the creation of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme. However, the decades of under-investment means that increasing social housing supply must continue to be a priority for the next Welsh Government. This includes setting an ambitious target for new social homes, increasing capital funding, and providing multi-year funding settlements to enable local authorities and housing associations to plan their development programmes.

Aligning development with housing need, as well as ensuring that social housing allocations are effective in reducing homelessness, will also be critical to ensuring that people can find the right home in the right place. As part of the transition to rapid rehousing, the next Welsh Government should continue to ensure that capital development and homelessness policy aligns at a national level, as well as supporting local authorities to do the same.

We are calling on the next Welsh Government to:

- Set an ambitious target for increasing social housing supply.
- Provide multi-year capital funding settlements to enable local authorities and housing associations to plan developments.
- Support the alignment of social housing development and allocations with homelessness need, including the provision of housing for supported accommodation and Housing First.
- Work across government to improve housing supply for learning disability supported living services.



Meeting housing need:

- There are nearly 11,000 people in temporary accommodation in Wales and around 90,000 Welsh households are on a social housing waiting list.
- The Welsh Government's estimate of additional housing need (February 2026) estimated that between 7,800 and 9,300 additional housing units are needed annually between July 2025 and June 2030
- The Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee has recommended that social housing should comprise a critical mass of at least 20 per cent of the housing stock in Wales (currently around 16%).

GREATER RECOGNITION FOR HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SUPPORT WORKERS

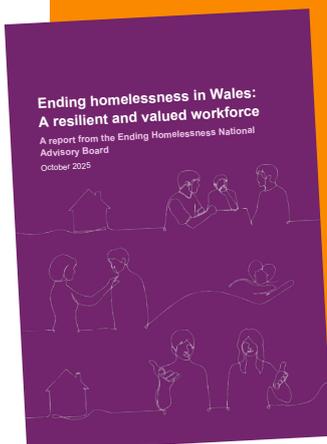
The homelessness and housing support workforce is critical to delivering the ambition to end homelessness. Every day, they go above and beyond the requirements of their role, providing life-changing support to people across Wales. However, for too long, they have not received the recognition they deserve, with pay and support constrained by funding and commissioning pressures.

We are calling on the next Welsh Government to implement the recommendations from the Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board's Workforce Task and Finish Group, to ensure that these key workers get the recognition, reward and support they deserve.

- **Improve pay:** The Workforce Task and Finish Group conducted research which found that pay for frontline homelessness and housing support workers was much lower than comparable roles in other sectors. The final report recommended that the Welsh Government should set out a pathway to an increase in pay over the next Senedd term, by providing additional funding, setting out expectations in guidance and grant conditions, and ensuring that commissioning processes reflect new expectations related to pay.
- **Improve support:** Homelessness and housing support staff often work in extremely challenging environments, supporting people to deal with significant and complex trauma, as well as encountering traumatic incidents in their work. The next Welsh Government should make policy and budget decisions to enable the provision of regular reflective practice and psychological support for all frontline homelessness and housing support staff, as well as high quality training to deal with the challenges of these roles.
- **Improve recognition:** Homelessness and housing support workers have incredible skills and knowledge, helping people to navigate complex systems and legislation, as well as providing emotional and practical support to people experiencing crises. Unfortunately, they do not always get the recognition they deserve, with their expertise too often dismissed by professionals in other services. The next Welsh Government should act to improve the recognition and respect for this invaluable workforce.

Workforce Task and Finish Group

The Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board established a Workforce Task and Finish group to advise the Welsh Government on how to implement the Homelessness Action Group's workforce-related recommendations. The final report was sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government in November 2025 after extensive engagement with frontline workers, service providers and commissioners. It made a series of recommendations on pay, support for staff, training and qualifications, and commissioning, which set out a pathway towards a resilient and valued workforce.



AMBITIOUS TARGETS FOR EXPANDING HOUSING FIRST ACROSS WALES

Housing First makes a significant difference to the lives of people who have previously been failed by traditional homelessness services and pathways, by providing a settled home as quickly as possible, alongside intensive, person-centred, multi-agency support. Tenancy sustainment rates for Housing First in Wales have been a remarkable 91% since 2018, demonstrating the effectiveness of this model.

Over the course of this Senedd term, the Welsh Government has continued its support for Housing First, as part of a rapid rehousing approach. Partnerships between local government, housing and support providers have seen an increase in Housing First services, with the model delivered in the majority of local authority areas. However, demand continues to outstrip supply.

We have seen other countries, such as Ireland, establish Housing First as a strategic priority and commit to ambitious targets for expanding the number of Housing First tenancies. We believe the next Welsh Government should do the same, building on the excellent work so far. This includes:

- Ensuring Housing First provision in every local authority.
- Committing to maintaining fidelity to the model.
- Setting an ambitious target for Housing First tenancies and working with local authorities and social landlords to achieve this aim.
- Funding the delivery of Housing First for women, to provide settled accommodation and support for women who have faced acute trauma and marginalisation.
- Working across government to ensure that all relevant public services are committed to working together to support Housing First clients.



What is Housing First?

Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that is focused on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into a settled home, while providing intensive, person-centred, multi-agency support for as long as it is needed. The model has been most successful with people with chronic and complex support needs, for whom traditional models of support have failed.



Case study: Housing First in Ireland

In March 2022, the Housing First National Office was launched with the appointment of Rob Lowth as National Director. This office is based at The Housing Agency and is responsible for coordinating and driving a national, cross-Government approach to Housing First, as set out in the *Housing First National Implementation Plan, 2022-2026*. This plan seeks to extend Housing First to every county in Ireland, and sets ambitious targets for the creation of 1,319 additional Housing First tenancies between 2022-2026.

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR LEARNING DISABILITY SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES

When we talk about everyone having the right to a safe place to call home and the opportunity to thrive in their communities, this is equally important for people with a learning disability. The supported living model provides people with a tenancy of their own and the person-centred support they need to live independent, fulfilled lives. These services are life-changing for people and their families, but the next Welsh Government needs to act to ensure their sustainability.

While funding constraints have affected all of the services we represent, our learning disability supported living members have faced significant financial challenges due to the lack of ring-fenced social care funding, increased National Insurance costs, and the failure to adequately fund the Real Living Wage commitment. Their status as not-for-profit providers brings huge added value to people and communities, but the current funding environment is putting their sustainability at risk. We are calling on the next Welsh Government to provide greater transparency and accountability on the Real Living Wage and ensure that not-for-profit supported living services are fully funded.

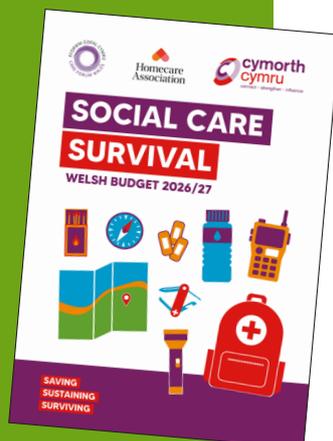
In order to ensure that people can continue to benefit from supported living services, there also needs to be a greater focus on securing the necessary housing supply. Planning the development of supported living services should be much easier than responding to an unexpected housing crisis, with learning disabilities typically diagnosed at birth or in early childhood. The next Welsh Government must ensure that appropriate planning, funding and partnership working can ensure that the right housing supply, care and support are ready for people when they make the transition to supported living.

We are calling on the next Welsh Government to:

- Deliver sustainable funding and fair commissioning to ensure that not-for-profit supported living services can continue to deliver high quality care and support.
- Improve housing supply for supported living services, so everyone has a place to call home in their communities, avoiding inappropriate placements far from home and/or in hospitals.
- Deliver fair pay and recognition for supported living workers, including greater transparency and accountability regarding the Real Living Wage commitment.

Social Care Survival

The Social Care Survival report outlined the significant financial challenges facing the social care sector, including supported living services for people with a learning disability. The report called for increased social care funding to cover the full costs of delivering services, and more transparency and accountability over the Real Living Wage commitment.



A STRATEGIC COMMITMENT TO PRIORITISE INCLUSION HEALTH

The health inequalities facing people experiencing homelessness and other marginalised groups are well evidenced, with a much higher likelihood of physical and mental health conditions, as well as a lower life expectancy. We believe that the new Welsh Government should make inclusion health a strategic priority, backed by leadership and funding, and encourage health boards to do the same.

Inclusion Health is an approach that aims to prevent and redress the inequities facing marginalised groups, by better understanding their needs, developing and equipping the workforce with the right understanding and skills, and delivering flexible, person-centred, integrated and accessible services. There is some excellent work being undertaken on inclusion health in different parts of Wales, but like many initiatives, this often relies on passionate and committed individuals, rather than being hard-wired into the system.

Public Health Wales has led important work in this area, developing tools and sharing good practice, and the National Strategic Health Inclusion Group has explored this approach as a sub-group of the Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board. However, it is time for the Welsh Government and health boards to prioritise this issue and give it the strategic importance it requires. We believe the next Welsh Government should:

- Appoint a Deputy Director responsible for Inclusion Health.
- Develop an inclusion health strategy, which considers how to lead and resource this approach, equip the workforce, and ensure that services are accessible and able to meet the needs of people in inclusion health groups.
- Consider how inclusion health is best delivered within primary care.
- Require health boards to appoint a leadership role with responsibility for inclusion health.
- Ensure that Regional Partnership Boards routinely consider inclusion health as part of their work.

Inclusion health groups

Inclusion health groups is an umbrella term used to describe people who are socially excluded, who typically experience multiple overlapping risk factors for poor health, such as poverty, violence, trauma, stigma and discrimination. This includes people who experience homelessness, refugees and asylum seekers, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, sex workers, and people in contact with the justice system.



Case study: Inclusion Health in Ireland

In Ireland, inclusion health is a national priority, with the Health Service Executive having established a National Office for Social Inclusion, which aims to reduce inequalities in health and improve access to mainstream and targeted health services for under-served and socially excluded groups in Ireland. Within the Health Service Executive regions, there are leadership roles dedicated entirely to social inclusion, with a budget and staff team to deliver inclusion health within that region. The budget for social inclusion in Dublin North is currently €40 million.