



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ending Homelessness in Wales:

A high level action plan
2021-2026

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Ending homelessness in Wales: A high level action plan – 2021-2026

How we will end homelessness in Wales

Ministerial foreword

There has been a paradigm shift in Wales' approach to addressing homelessness since the pandemic began. Existing concepts and established ways of working have been up-ended in a way that would have been unimaginable more than twenty months ago. It has been a difficult but necessary change, allowing us to truly begin the transformation needed to achieve our long term goal of ending homelessness in Wales.



I have been very clear that we will not change course because the Welsh Government sees homelessness as being simply intolerable.

The Ending Homelessness High Level Action Plan builds on our 2019 Strategy to End Homelessness and the work and recommendations of the expert Homelessness Task and Finish Group. It sets the direction for the work of the Welsh Government and its partners to end homelessness in Wales over the next five years. The crisis created by the pandemic has provided us with a unique opportunity to accelerate actions and make radical changes to the systems and processes that prevent homelessness, focusing primarily on early preventative actions across public services and, in housing, making the transformational shift in approach towards rapid rehousing.

The Programme for Government sets out our commitment to this transformation as part of a suite of measures to strengthen and build our communities. Through this high level Action Plan we are proposing a radical shift so most cases of homelessness are prevented and it becomes a rarity; if anyone does experience homelessness we expect they will be provided with quick respite, making that experience brief, with support allowing people to access suitable, long-term and stable homes so that homelessness is no longer repeated.

We would not have the opportunity to make such a radical change without the extraordinary work of those in homelessness and housing support services across local authorities, RSLs and third sector organisations. Those efforts have given hope, began the process of recovery and for many people, and – quite simply - kept people alive during the pandemic. I am truly grateful for this work and I am determined we build on these successes.

I appreciate that for our partners who have delivered so much since March 2020, the Action Plan may create concern given the transformation I want to see. I understand

those concerns and I am determined that where further support is needed the Welsh Government will provide it, as we have done through record investment in the Housing Support Grant and the Social Housing Grant to help achieve the transformational change.

Responsibility for ending homelessness, however, extends beyond the dedicated homelessness and housing teams and departments, reflecting that homelessness is caused by factors other than access and availability of affordable homes. We have to address the core structural issues of poverty and inequality, ensure the availability and effectiveness of universal and targeted prevention measures. We need to effectively respond to trauma and adverse childhood experiences, mental ill health and substance misuse and to the full diversity of housing needs, including ethnic minority people and disabled people. This makes ending homelessness a cross-sector priority relevant to health, social services, education, criminal justice, community services and our wider economy. The Action Plan recognises these issues and will demand an 'all public services' response.

The scale of ambition in this Action Plan reflects the urgency and scale of response required to address the level of homelessness in Wales, with more than 6,900 adults and children currently housed in temporary accommodation. The corrosive experience of homelessness eats away at a person's self-esteem as well as their confidence. This makes it difficult for individuals and families to engage in meaningful activity and takes them away from informal and formal support. It is why preventing it in the first place and where it does occur shifting to a rapid rehousing approach, where we quickly move people onto permanent homes, is so important.

Increasing housing capacity, both in the social and private rented sector will be fundamental to ending homelessness. This will be led by our ambitious social house building programme which will help us shift towards rapid rehousing. We have also increased the incentives for private landlords to work with local authorities to help house those most in need through the national roll-out of the Welsh Government's private rented sector leasing scheme. No one tool or action alone will end homelessness, we must use all the levers we have at our disposal.

During the pandemic we have worked together with determination towards a clear, single, shared goal of not leaving anyone without a home. We now need to step forward, together as leaders and professionals in public service across Wales, united in not tolerating homelessness and working to ensure everyone in Wales has a safe and appropriate place to call home.



Julie James MS
Minister for Climate Change

Introduction

The Welsh Government published its Strategy for Ending Homelessness¹ [“the 2019 Strategy”] in October 2019. At the same time, an expert Homelessness Action Group was commissioned to address a number of key questions to assist in achieving our longer term goal of ending homelessness in Wales. The Group engaged widely with those with lived experience and other key stakeholders, in producing three reports² which contain a range of recommendations.

The publication of the second and most wide-ranging report of the Homelessness Action Group coincided with the start of the pandemic. Whilst the impact of the pandemic has significantly changed the landscape across all aspects of our lives in Wales, the strategic direction set out in our 2019 Strategy, and supported by the recommendations within the Homelessness Action Group reports, remains unchanged. The fundamental system-wide changes needed to end homelessness, as set out in the Homelessness Action Group reports have not been altered by the pandemic, they have merely been accelerated. The actions taken by the Welsh Government throughout the pandemic and the transformation we have begun in our homelessness services have been informed by the recommendations of the Action Group.

This all age action plan, encompassing the full diversity of people in Wales, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, therefore builds on the work we have already begun and sets out the high level actions we will be taking over the next five years. The plan is intended to be a living document, which we will update annually to record progress made and to update actions and outline the next steps to be taken.

Pandemic Response

At the start of the first lockdown in March 2020, an emergency homelessness response was put in place. This involved additional funding, together with both statutory and non-statutory guidance to ensure that no-one was left without accommodation, together with the support they need, to stay safe during the pandemic.

The inclusive ‘no-one left out’ approach has been in place continuously since then and to date has resulted in local authorities and their partners supporting over 15,300 people into temporary accommodation since March 2020. Latest data³ shows there were 6,935 people in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2021, of which 1,742 were dependent children. Rough sleeper numbers in Wales are estimated to be 128 in September 2021, with numbers increasing slightly over the summer period. The data available is more accurate and current than it has ever

¹ [Homelessness strategy | GOV.WALES](#)

² [Homelessness Action Group: report October 2019 | GOV.WALES](#); [Homelessness Action Group: report March 2020 | GOV.WALES](#); [Homelessness Action Group: report July 2020 | GOV.WALES](#)

³ [Homelessness accommodation provision and rough sleeping: September 2021 | GOV.WALES](#)

been and provides a clearer understanding of all forms of homelessness in Wales, which would otherwise be masked through sofa surfing, living in overcrowded homes or unconventional types of dwellings.

Whilst the pressure on homelessness services remains high, with around 1,000 people presenting a month, understanding the true scale of homelessness presents us with a unique opportunity to make the radical change required to address it. It increases the urgency and importance of preventative work to stop people ever experiencing the destabilising impact of homelessness. It increases the urgency and understanding of the housing capacity required, both in the social and private sector, to make the transformational shift required to end homelessness.

Strategic Direction

The Programme for Government includes two key actions which will be critical to ending homelessness through a commitment to fundamentally reform homelessness services to focus on prevention and rapid rehousing and building 20,000 new low carbon social homes for rent. We know that to end all forms of homelessness in Wales we have to focus far more of our time and resources on preventing it in the first place. Many people who are homeless or have experienced homelessness will have faced shared experiences and barriers, including different forms of discrimination, lack the means to manage day to day aspects of their lives and encountered a lack of coordinated support between public services. The actions within this plan are designed to provide the right environment and working practices for staff and services to deliver interventions that can make a difference over an individual's lifetime, not just a few weeks.

We are committed to moving away from the 'staircase', earned rewards, model of service delivery. As part of the transformation we want to re-shape services around a rapid re-housing approach - shifting the focus of our policy, practice and resources towards long term, settled, housing solutions, away from the provision of emergency, temporary and hostel services.

Definition of homelessness

The definition relied on for the Action Plan is provided by the 2019 Strategy and will provide understanding and context for policy set out in the Action Plan as well as the actions themselves:

Homelessness is where a person lacks accommodation or where their tenure is not secure. Rough sleeping is the most visible and acute end of the homelessness spectrum, but homelessness includes anyone who has no accommodation, cannot gain access to their accommodation or where it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy accommodation. This would include overcrowding, 'sofa surfing', victims of abuse and many more scenarios. A person is also homeless if their accommodation is a moveable structure and there is no place where it can be placed.

Definition of ending homelessness

The Strategy outlines the Welsh Government's approach to ending homelessness. This is based on an understanding that in Wales homelessness is a rarity (prevented in most cases) and when it does occur, it is brief, the individual or household is supported back into accommodation quickly and sufficiently supported so that they do not fall back into homelessness, setting households up to succeed not to fail.

Policy Principles

As set out in the 2019 Strategy, there are a number of principles that underpin our approach to homelessness prevention and we expect these principles to underpin the work of our delivery partners and to be reflected across public services. These are:

- The earliest preventions are most effective and most cost effective and should always be the interventions of first choice.
- Tackling and preventing homelessness is a public services matter – rather than only a 'housing matter'.
- All services should place the individual at the centre and work together in a trauma informed way.
- The duties in Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 should be the last line of defence – not the first - and all services should work to the spirit not simply the letter of the law.
- Policy, service delivery and practice should be informed and shaped in a co-productive manner and by those with lived experience.

Action Plan

The chapters of the action plan set out the key components required to make homelessness rare, brief and unrepeated. The overarching importance of partnership working is also recognised and outlined with a specific chapter in the plan. These elements then come together to provide a table of high level actions we will be undertaking in the short, medium and longer term.

Equalities, anti-discrimination and human rights

The Welsh Government is wholly committed to promotion of equality, to active anti-discrimination and to human rights. There is a robust legal and policy framework to underpin this in Wales, including the Public Sector Equalities Duty, Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure, socio-economic duty and the Welsh Government equalities plans, including most recently the development of the Race Equality Action Plan. Equalities, anti-discrimination and human rights will underpin the Ending Homelessness Action Plan, recognising the barriers of inequality, discrimination and marginalisation that particular groups are much more likely to face. This includes those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010,

and those living with and in socio-economic disadvantage and poverty. Often people will face multiple barriers and the 'intersectionality' of their experience of inequality and the poorer outcomes this drives will inform the plan and the outcomes it is seeking to achieve. The voices of those with lived experience of homelessness will be key to this.

There will be an ongoing and iterative assessment of the impact on equality, including potential negative impacts on particular groups and people, and opportunities to advance equality and embed the progressive realisation of people's human rights across all areas of the plan.

'Partnerships'

The 2019 Strategy makes clear that homelessness cannot be prevented through housing alone and that all public services and the third sector have a role to play, working together to prevent homelessness and where it cannot be prevented ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeatable. Partnership working therefore must be at the heart of everything we do.

Homelessness is not the starting point for people, but rather the result of a combination of adverse life events and the lack of the right support at the right time, where early intervention has either not been available or has failed. Such adverse events might include the loss of loved ones; ill health; job loss; domestic abuse; relationship breakdown; family disputes; and/or structural factors such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, unfavourable labour market conditions. These circumstances make individuals vulnerable to inequalities of outcome, of which homelessness is a severe kind. In August 2020, the Equality, Local Government & Communities Committee⁴ found that:

“During the pandemic, our chances of dying, losing jobs or falling behind in education have in part been determined by our age, race, gender, disability, income and where we live. The virus and the response to it is widening existing inequalities, by reducing the incomes and increasing risks disproportionately for some groups of people”.

With over 15,300 people being supported into temporary accommodation between March 2020 and September 2021, the scale of what may once have been considered hidden homelessness and inequality within Wales has become evident.

Homelessness prevention requires a holistic response, grounded in partnership working. Preventative action will happen at different stages, but will follow along a continuum, allowing a range of public services and service providers opportunities to assist, depending on the situation. This is illustrated by following four prevention

⁴ <https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld13403/cr-ld13403-e.pdf>

elements, outlined in the Strategy, which reflect the scope and intensity of partnership working:

- Primary Prevention - Preventing or minimising the risk of problems arising, usually through universal policies e.g. education; health promotion; good housing management and tenancy support.
- Secondary Prevention - Targeting individuals or groups at high risk or showing early signs of a particular problem to try to stop it occurring e.g. early referral to family or youth support services.
- Tertiary Prevention - Intervening once there is a problem to stop it getting worse and to redress the situation e.g. writing off rent arrears to avoid eviction.
- Acute Spending - Spending to manage the impact of a strongly negative situation - does little or nothing to prevent problems recurring in future e.g. cost of temporary housing when made homeless; long term cost of supporting children who have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a result of loss of home.

Reports produced by the Homelessness Action Group identified a number of issues relevant to partnership working to be addressed by the Welsh Government and homelessness prevention delivery partners, broadly summarised as the following:

- Providing clearer strategic direction through a homelessness prevention outcomes framework
- Creating a space for uncovering strategic issues
- Reviewing and evaluating existing structures for partnerships
- Practical support to join up delivery and empowering staff and improving their skills (PATH training)
- Strategic oversight/scrutiny and reporting on policies and practice to prevent homelessness
- Involving people with lived experience of homelessness in decision making
- Improving understanding of homelessness and preventative actions through better data and communications/language

Work has been underway throughout the pandemic to strengthen partnership working in line with the recommendations of the Action Group. A Housing Support National Advisory Board has been established to provide oversight and examine and provide advice on strategic issues. The Welsh Government has established a team of Relationship Managers to work closely with every local authority in Wales with the aim of strengthening partnership working and supporting delivery of homelessness prevention policy. The guidance issued by the Welsh Government at the start of the pandemic required the establishment of homelessness coordination cells to improve collaboration between partners, share good practice and identify how best to integrate priorities to deliver on homelessness prevention objectives. All these actions have considerably

strengthened partnership working and provide a strong basis to build on over the next five years.

‘Rare’ – Ensuring homelessness is rare means preventing people becoming homeless in the first place

This part of the Action Plan is about prevention and outlines the approach which will be taken to address the causes of homelessness. Only through preventative actions will it be possible to make homelessness rare.

When making decisions of a strategic nature public bodies in Wales must give weight to particular issues, in proportion to its relevance, as part of their statutory duties towards equality, reducing inequalities of outcome and social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. Policies and practice which improve people’s health, give opportunities to access employment or gain employment are key in preventing homelessness and reflect the wider role played by services outside the housing sector.

As part of secondary prevention measures we know that identifying people at risk of homelessness at a much earlier stage and ensuring the appropriate response is in place is crucial to ending all forms of homelessness. This is particularly important for young people, where there are real opportunities for early identification of risk factors at school age and the chance to put support structures and services in place to ensure a positive life trajectory that makes the prospect or experience of homelessness rare.

Certain groups and individuals within society are particularly vulnerable to homelessness. Their unique characteristics as well as their circumstances or lived experiences will contribute towards the level of risk they face. For these people, targeted and tailored support will be required at different points, alongside more universal preventative action in order to make the prospect or experience of homelessness rare. The Welsh Government considers that a particular focus should be given to existing ‘pathways’⁵ that are followed, the roles and responsibilities of institutions to assist people to live independently, training requirements to improve culture and practice and governance frameworks that operate at national and local levels.

The Homelessness Action Group’s reports explored the issue of prevention at a range of levels (crisis, targeted or universal) and produced a number of recommendations, which can be broadly summarised as follows:

- Identifying opportunities to improve practice through existing legal provision.
- Improving practice and provision of substance misuse services.

⁵ Pathways represent the experiences a person is likely to encounter as they move on from institutions which have controlled or affected the control they have on their own lives.

- Smoothing pathways for groups at risk of harm (people leaving prison, care experienced young people, people with physical/MH problems, former members of the Armed Forces personnel, refugees, etc.)
- Aligning housing construction and supply with the demand and needs of those at risk of homelessness or are experiencing it.
- Ensuring comprehensive local authority tenancy sustainment services are in place, designed to respond proactively to issues arise that could lead to people becoming homeless.
- Ensuring actions to reduce child poverty and adverse childhood experiences are aligned with homelessness prevention policy and practice.
- Improving communication strategies and campaigns to benefit understanding and support interventions for preventing homelessness.

As with partnership working, actions taken throughout the pandemic have meant a range of preventative actions have been taken. This is particularly the case in respect of targeted prevention. The Welsh Government has taken unprecedented actions to support tenants, preventing them from becoming homeless and supporting them to stay in their own home. In addition to existing support, this has included:

- Legal measures to prevent evictions from December 2020 to June 2021;
- Legal measures to extend notice periods to six months before court action and eviction can take place in almost all cases - to the end of December 2021;
- £4.1 million to top up Department for Work and Pensions funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, to help those in receipt of housing related benefits who are in rent arrears;
- Funding of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) Debt Helpline to advise and support private sector tenants struggling with rent, income and housing benefits; delivered by Citizen's Advice Cymru;
- Funding of £166 million to local authorities in 2021-22 through the Housing Support Grant to deliver housing related support services (£40m increase on previous year). The services help to prevent people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.
- £10m Tenant Hardship Grant to help those in rent arrears as a result of the pandemic;
- Funding for Shelter Cymru to advise and support tenants.

As a result of the measures put in place, eviction action leading to tenants being made homeless has reduced significantly during the pandemic. This has also been due to the fact that local authorities and registered social landlords in this period have adapted their practices further, strengthening the commitment that many had already made to limit eviction action and where that is not possible ensure that eviction does not lead to homelessness. Whilst the possibility of evicting a tenant into homelessness was paused due to legal restraints, there is

potential to reach a critical mass, where a 'no evictions into homelessness' policy is adopted close to a universal level.

The emergency measures put in place during the pandemic and actions taken by local authorities to house all who are homeless, due to the public health risks caused by the pandemic, has led to an unprecedented increase in acute level actions and associated spend. The Welsh Government has provided additional funding of on average £2 million a month to provide accommodation and support to those experiencing homelessness, with over 15,300 people supported since March 2020. This response has been inclusive, and due to the public health emergency has included those with No Recourse to Public Funds.

With an additional £50 million investment local authorities, housing associations and third sector partners have helped us deliver hundreds of new temporary and permanent homes, as well as new wrap-around services across housing support, substance misuse, mental health, primary care and community safety. Whilst such acute actions have been required due to the public health emergency, our medium to long term aim is to shift our resources and response to earlier prevention activity.

The Welsh Government recognises that the easing of lockdown measures presents risks for those who have been found a place to live during the pandemic, but are yet to find a safe and secure home. As homelessness will not be ended in the short-term, the actions taken and investment made during the pandemic, to accelerate the initial stages of the transformation, will now focus on maintaining the rapidity of the response for people who lose their homes and provide the best possible options that meet their needs and aspirations.

‘Brief’ – how a national focus on rapid rehousing will lead to a Wales where homelessness is brief

This part of the Action Plan is about making homelessness brief through a programme of transformative change. The best way to make homelessness brief is by making sure people experiencing it reach settled housing as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation. This relies on a transformational shift to rapid rehousing, which we recognise will take a number of years and involve investment across a range of services.

Rapid rehousing is an internationally recognised approach designed to provide people experiencing homelessness with secure, settled and self-contained housing as quickly as possible. Rapid rehousing includes the following characteristics:

- A focus on helping people into permanent accommodation at the same time as, rather than after, addressing any other support needs.
- No requirement to be assessed for ‘housing readiness’ in order to access accommodation.
- Offering a package of assistance and multi-agency support, specially tailored to individual needs where this is required.
- Helping people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with lower or no support needs, and in doing so preventing complex needs or chronic problems from occurring or escalating.

Rapid rehousing recognises that the vast majority of people who have experienced homelessness, even those who have been severely marginalised and homeless for a long time, are able to maintain their tenancies in self-contained housing, with the right level of support. Providing a home as quickly as possible will help avoid the destabilising and marginalising effects of prolonged homelessness or prolonged stays in emergency or temporary settings while remaining homeless. If rapid rehousing can be widely adopted then the need for many forms of temporary accommodation should diminish, although the Welsh Government recognises that there will continue to be a need for temporary housing solutions at times.

Housing First and/or other intensive options, must form a key part of each authorities rapid rehousing approach and in particular be the default approach for those who are identified as requiring high needs (i.e. requiring over 3 hours of support per week).

The ambition of this action plan will be for rapid rehousing to provide the overarching response for anyone who is experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Housing First will represent one form of rapid rehousing for people with multiple and complex support needs in addition to their housing need. We also need to ensure that all services continue to provide support to individuals even when tenancies have failed or their behaviour would otherwise have led to their expulsion from services. This working in a trauma informed, non-judgemental way will be absolutely critical in adopting rapid rehousing.

We must resist the temptation to dilute existing Housing First services in the face of additional demand as a result of adopting rapid rehousing or risk repeating the failures of the past, and see some of Wales' most marginalised and disadvantaged citizens left without a service that can meet their needs. As a result, and for a certain cohort of people experiencing homelessness, Housing First, and other intensive packages, will be the right response amongst a spectrum of other services.

The Homelessness Action Group recommended that the Welsh Government and local authorities lead a transition to sustaining tenancies and rapid rehousing as the default approach for those at risk of homelessness or experiencing it.

The move to a national approach to rapid rehousing has been taken forward through the pandemic, although it is important to recognise that such a fundamental shift is a three to five year transformation. Those changes will involve the development by local authorities of transition plans to housing and homelessness services from the current model to the rapid rehousing approach. This reshaping of services will inevitably take time to develop enough housing supply in order to get the right housing, in the right place at the right time for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. To assist with this work, the Welsh Government will consider how communications can be developed which promote the use of rapid rehousing principles in order to support local authorities embed it within their practices. The guidance published by the Welsh Government to inform the planning and bids as part of the £50 million Phase 2 scheme, was based on rapid rehousing and the recommendations of the Homelessness Action Group. Welsh Government investment in the Housing First Programme (£1.9 million in 2021/22) over a number of years, together with the work of the Housing First Network, has instilled this approach throughout Wales. Therefore, whilst there is a considerable programme of transformation to undertake to ensure the legislative, funding and policy framework supports rapid rehousing, there is a foundation of activity to build on.

‘Unrepeated’ – Ensuring we have a system which places the right people in the right homes in the right communities with the right support, in order for people to succeed and thrive

For homelessness to be rare and brief, steps must also be taken to prevent it from reoccurring. This part of the Action Plan deals with the transformative steps that will ensure homelessness is unrepeated. The supply and availability of housing for households who have experienced or face homelessness plays a vital role in meeting this objective. The Welsh Government considers that four overriding steps must be taken.

- Ensure there is a strong interface between the strategic planning for housing supply and development and the needs of households experiencing homelessness;
- Ensure the process of allocating housing is aligned to and supports the goal of ending homelessness;
- Ensure reduction of barriers to people experiencing homelessness who need to access housing in the social and private rented sectors;
- Ensure housing support is in place for those who need it to help them sustain their home and thrive in it.

The process of determining supply in Wales is led primarily by local authorities who are responsible for identifying need within their area. The Welsh Government allocates funding via the Social Housing Grant Programme to allow local authorities to support their strategic affordable housing priorities. The calculation of housing need is initially captured by a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA). Local authorities use the evidence from the LHMA to develop their prospectus which summarises the housing need and the priorities for the Social Housing Grant in their area. Local authorities will then work with registered social landlords and their own development team to bring forward schemes, which enable local need to be met. This will include accommodation to alleviate homelessness.

The Welsh Government recognises the important role social housing plays in ending homelessness as reflected by the Programme for Government’s ambitious target to build 20,000 new low carbon social homes for rent during the term of this Government. Through this commitment there will be an opportunity for social landlords to provide enough housing of the right type and quality in the right locations, to meet the needs of people who are homeless, or at risk of experiencing it.

Welsh Government statistics indicate a mixed approach across Wales when it comes to allocating social housing to households experiencing homelessness. As part of the fundamental reform to transform homelessness services, we are committed to reviewing the allocations process, to build on good practice, and where necessary reforming it to ensure it is sufficiently aligned to and supports the goal of ending homelessness.

The private rented sector also has an important role to play. The Welsh Government Private Rented Sector leasing scheme will strengthen links between local authorities and private sector landlords providing pathways for homeless households into housing and offering financial stability and support for landlords who are able to make housing available to households nominated by the local authority. One of the key objectives of the scheme is to improve access to longer term, good quality accommodation for those at risk of homelessness or actually homeless. The scheme provides additional funding to ensure that tenants receive tailored and regular support aimed at supporting the success of the tenancy. The Welsh Government plans to launch the scheme nationally in the autumn and anticipates that it will be a useful tool in local authorities' rapid rehousing approach.

The forthcoming implementation of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, as recently amended to improve security of tenure, represents a wholesale change to the law governing residential tenancies and licences in Wales. Generally, local authority and registered social landlord tenants and licensees, termed 'contract-holders' under the Act, will be issued with a 'secure contract', based on the current secure tenancy issued by local authorities. Contract-holders of private landlords will generally be issued with a 'standard contract', under which they will be entitled to a minimum six-month 'no-fault' notice to end the contract, and the notice can only be served after six months' of occupation. This means that, providing a contract-holder does not breach their contract, they will be entitled to a minimum occupation of one year, effectively doubling current security of tenure in the private rented sector. The Act also includes provision to prevent retaliatory eviction, ensure dwellings are fit for human habitation, and require that all contract-holders are given written contracts, to help ensure clarity on the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants.

Table of High Level Actions

No.	Action	Delivery partners (national, regional or local)	Timetable (short (<1 year), medium (1-2 years) or long-term (>3 years)	Resource requirement / provided
Transformation of the homelessness system				
1	<p>Develop and deliver rapid rehousing transition plans in all areas of Wales</p> <p>Local authorities to develop rapid rehousing transition plans as part of their Housing Support Programme Strategies. WG will develop and publish guidance to support LAs in this process, as well as holding a range of engagement events to explain and explore issues and challenges where rapid rehousing may conflict with existing allocation policies.</p> <p>Continue to support the expansion and maintain fidelity of Housing First across Wales</p>	<p>LAs / WG / RSLs</p> <p>LAs will lead on this work working with housing provider partners.</p>	<p>Short term – rapid rehousing transition plans in place by end of September 2022 (draft by end of June 2022)</p> <p>Short/ Medium Term – Task and Finish Group of key stakeholders established under National Advisory Board to support implementation</p>	<p>WG guidance will be available to LAs to help shape their rapid rehousing transition plans. Ongoing support will be provided where needed through WG policy officials and relationship managers.</p> <p>Flexibility within Housing Support Grant for LA resource to support planning and transition</p> <p>£1.9m Housing First Programme RRH Task and Finish Group to identify any resourcing aspects required for effective implementation</p>
2	<p>Support the continued emergency response and transition to rapid rehousing</p>	<p>WG, LAs and RSLs, Third sector partners</p>	<p>Short term – funding to LAs in 2021/22 through the Local Authority Hardship Fund for continued</p>	<p>Housing Support Grant budget increased by £40m in 2021-22 (taking total to £166.7m) in recognition of</p>

	<p>WG to maintain the emergency (public health) housing arrangements, developing guidance and direction on the transition process for rapid rehousing and provide local authorities with the means to revise and develop their housing and homelessness services so that they are aligned with rapid rehousing.</p>	<p>WG will be the primary lead, engaging other partners in this work</p>	<p>emergency response. Guidance on rapid rehousing transition developed and issued.</p> <p>Medium term – LA transition plans in place and implementation underway</p>	<p>level of previously unmet support needs.</p> <p>Additional £10m added to homelessness aspect of Hardship Fund for Q3 and Q4 of 2021-22</p> <p>Additional £2m for discretionary homelessness prevention measures</p>
3	<p>Develop and publish a Green Paper examining required legislative reform</p> <p>The WG will evaluate existing homelessness prevention legal provision and review areas to improve the law, to maintain the ‘no-one left out’ approach taken through the pandemic and to ensure that all public services are working in partnership to prevent homelessness. This work will be taken forward initially through a Green Paper, examining both legislative and non-legislative options.</p> <p>This will include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Need - Intentionality - Allocations 	<p>WG – engaging with a range of partners</p>	<p>Short term – Green Paper to be published in 2022</p>	<p>WG establishing an expert group of stakeholders to assist in the development of the potential legislative reform.</p> <p>The development of the Green Paper will be delivered primarily by WG policy officials and lawyers, who will engage with a wide-range of stakeholders.</p> <p>A regulatory impact assessment, including an equality impact assessment, will be developed alongside legislative proposals to provide the best estimates</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evictions - Local connection - Suitability - Duties on public bodies - Rights based approach 			of the likely impact of possible reforms.
4	<p>Increase housing supply, availability and accessibility in the social and private sector</p> <p>WG will work with LAs, RSLs, RSW and others to increase supply, availability and accessibility across both sectors – ensuring that the needs of those experiencing homelessness are reflected in the processes for assessing need, developing and delivering additional homes and within allocation arrangements.</p> <p>20,000 new social homes for rent will be built within the current Welsh Government term, which alongside the leasing of homes from private landlords, will help ease pressure on housing services for people at risk or are experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>The Welsh Government recognises the vital role private landlords will need to play to help end</p>	WG (via 20k target), LAs with RSLs control over how housing development links reflects the homeless population.	<p>Short term - increased funding. 2021-22 – Social Housing Grant funding almost doubled to £250m to support increased delivery.</p> <p>Short/ Medium term – national roll-out of PRS Leasing Scheme</p> <p>Long term - 20,000 delivery by end of term of government</p>	<p>£250m allocated in 2021/22 to Social Housing Grant</p> <p>£262,000 revenue and £170,000 capital funding will be provided in 2021/22 to support the national roll-out of the private rented sector leasing scheme, with up to £66.3m set aside for this work over the next ten years.</p>

	homelessness and will identify with the sector barriers which can be removed or opportunities taken to increase and sustain their contribution.			
5	<p>Develop a resilient and valued workforce recognised for their expertise</p> <p>WG will commission work to develop with partners a workforce recruitment, training and development framework for homelessness and housing support staff. This work will promote the sector as a career and explore how we establish a psychologically informed approach across housing services. The framework will highlight how we influence cultures across governance, funding and commissioning structures as well as front line teams in the sector.</p>	WG, LAs and service delivery partners	<p>Short term – Task and Finish Group established of key stakeholders under National Advisory Board to lead development of work</p> <p>Medium to long-term – delivery and implementation of the framework</p>	Task and Finish Group to identify any resourcing aspects required for effective implementation
6	<p>Adopt assertive outreach approaches across Wales</p> <p>Local authorities and homelessness prevention service providers to ensure outreach workers have capacity and capability to support move away from rough sleeping to appropriate</p>	<p>LAs</p> <p>LAs will lead on this action working with housing provider partners and those supporting housing services more generally.</p>	Short to medium term	£166.7m Housing Support Grant provided in 2021/22, which can be used by LAs to pay for outreach services, and training for HSG funded staff.

	accommodation at the earliest opportunity.			
7	<p>Strengthen Housing Support Services</p> <p>WG and local authorities to ensure that funding and commissioning frameworks ensure comprehensive tenancy sustainment services are in place, designed to respond proactively to issues, as they arise, that could lead to people becoming homeless.</p> <p>Services should not be limited to housing alone and will extend more widely, recognising the integrated nature of factors influencing homelessness. Effective responses will require a person-centred approach extending across a variety of sectors.</p>	<p>LAs</p> <p>LAs will lead on this work working with housing provider partners and those supporting housing services more generally.</p>	<p>Short term – funding to Housing Support Grant – increase by £40m to £166.7m in 2021/22. Review HSG guidance.</p> <p>Medium term – Revised guidance as required to strengthen support services</p>	<p>£166.7m Housing Support Grant provided in 2021/22 to Local Authorities to plan and commission housing related support services, including services which support tenancy sustainment.</p>

No.	Action	Delivery partners (national, regional or local)	Timetable (short (<1 year), medium (1-2 years) or long-term (>3 years))	Resource requirement / provided
Prevention				
8	<p>Ensure alignment with ACEs and Tackling poverty policies</p> <p>WG to ensure that the workforce development of Welsh public services are designed to reduce poverty, including child poverty, and promote financial security and independence and are aligned with homelessness prevention policy and practice.</p>	<p>WG (Housing Policy, Tackling poverty, Health and Social Care, SM/MH)</p> <p>WG will be the primary lead, engaging other partners in this work</p>	<p>Short Term – review resources and work underway in this area</p>	<p>Review to assess current resources and identify gaps further investment required</p>
9	<p>Improve early intervention and targeted prevention measures</p> <p>Local authorities to strengthen systems for identifying young people at risk of homelessness much earlier. Ensuring suitable support is put in place for those identified.</p> <p>WG will work to develop, revise or improve implementation of</p>	<p>WG (Housing Policy, Health, Education and Social Care, SM/MH), HMPPS/MoJ, LAs</p> <p>WG will lead on this and will rely on partner organisations with operational responsibility to deliver on this action.</p>	<p>Short to medium term – Young People: Integrated approach in WG Children and Young People’s Plan Refresh of YEPF to strengthen early identification of young people at risk Continued investment in Youth Homelessness Co-ordinators</p>	<p>£3.7m of the Homelessness Prevention Grant allocated to the Youth Support Grant to support early identification activity.</p> <p>£762,977 Accommodating those leaving prison programme</p>

	<p>pathways with tailored support, appropriate interventions and housing solutions for groups at risk of harm (children at risk of adverse childhood experiences, people leaving prison, those fleeing VAWDASV, ethnic minority people, care experienced young people, disabled people, including those with mental health problems and those with learning disabilities, former members of the Armed Forces, refugees, etc.). This will lead to public services adopting a no discharge/release into homelessness policy. Measures should recognise the urgency of need and deliver support at pace whenever that is required.</p>		<p>People leaving prison: Development and implementation of strategy with HMPPS, WLGA and WG</p> <p>Targeted prevention for other groups: Develop, revise or improve implementation of pathways with tailored support, appropriate interventions and housing solutions</p>	
10	<p>Review and reform family mediation provision to ensure effective and consistent provision across Wales</p> <p>WG will undertake a review of family mediation services with the aim of developing an approach with ensures effective and</p>	<p>WG</p> <p>WG will be the primary lead, engaging other partners in this work as part of the review process.</p>	<p>Short term - Transfer funding for family mediation services into Housing Support Grant and develop supplementary guidance</p> <p>Medium term - Review provision across Wales</p>	<p>£373,000 funding for family mediation currently within the Homelessness Prevention Grant</p>

	consistent provision across Wales to assist families at an earlier stage.			
11	<p>Improving practice and provision of services for people with mental health and/or neurodevelopmental issues</p> <p>We will continue to support our key actions within the mental health delivery plan to enable tailored mental health support for individuals to manage tenancies independently, and support the trial of new approaches to working in partnership to support rough sleepers and people who are homeless or who are at risk of homeless.</p> <p>We will identify and map, through a programme of research, the spectrum of individuals and the differing needs of people who are experiencing homelessness. This will include developing a better insight into the differing groups of people (for example those using stimulants, depressants or opioids) and their mental health and substance misuse needs, as</p>	WG, Health Boards, Local authorities and Third sector	Short Term – Establish Health and Housing Task and Finish Group of key stakeholders under National Advisory Board to support development and implementation	Task and Finish Group to assist in establishing any resource implications

	well as those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We will use this information to strengthen pathways to services that will help prevent or address homelessness.			
12	<p>Improve practice and provision of services for people with substance misuse issues including those with co-occurring mental health issues</p> <p>Although many people who experience homelessness or at risk of homelessness will not have substance misuse or mental health problems, homelessness may lead to pressures that make sustaining a tenancy difficult.</p> <p>We will continue to support our key actions within both the substance misuse and mental health delivery plans to support the homeless. This will include learning from the £1m in Complex Needs we have provided to four pilots in Wales specifically supporting this work. Further development will be led through our Deep Dive group supporting</p>	WG, Area Planning Boards, Health Boards, Local authorities and Third sector	Short Term – Establish Health and Housing Task and Finish Group of key stakeholders under National Advisory Board to support development and implementation	<p>£166.7m Housing Support Grant provided in 2021/22, which can be used by LAs to ensure sufficient wrap-around support in place to support those with complex needs to maintain tenancies.</p> <p>The Welsh Government invests almost £55m annually in substance misuse services. Providing support and treatment for people who experience homelessness is a priority within the delivery plan.</p>

	improvements in provision for those experiencing co-occurring substance misuse and mental health.			
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No.	Action	Delivery partners (national, regional or local)	Timetable (short (<1 year), medium (1-2 years) or long-term (>3 years)	Resource requirement / provided
Overarching supporting actions				
13	<p>Develop new Homelessness Outcomes Framework</p> <p>The homelessness outcomes within the framework will be designed so that other policy frameworks are integrated and contributing actively to their achievement.</p>	<p>WG, LAs, RSLs, Third Sector housing partners</p> <p>WG will be the primary lead, engaging other partners in this work</p>	<p>Short to medium term</p> <p>Policy development - Now to May 2022</p> <p>Informal Stakeholder Engagement - Now- May 2022</p> <p>Formal consultation – June 2022</p> <p>Launch - End 2022</p> <p>Evaluation - Six months after launch</p>	<p>The work will be delivered through a Task and Finish Group of the Housing Support National Advisory Board, policy officials and officers within relevant organisations.</p> <p>Resource implications on contributory organisations will be considered during development phase.</p> <p>Engagement and communications resource will be required once the Framework is developed.</p>

				Evaluation resource will be required once the Framework is operational.
14	<p>Review and revise data collection to support new outcomes framework</p> <p>WG will evaluate existing data collection arrangements and requirements, both statutory and non-statutory across homelessness and housing support to ensure they clearly and accurately illustrate progress towards ending homelessness and support the new outcomes framework</p>	<p>WG, LAs, RSLs and housing delivery partners</p> <p>WG will be the primary lead, engaging other partners in this work</p>	<p>Short term – work to commence</p> <p>Medium term – any new statutory data collection to align with legislative reform</p>	<p>Resource implications will be considered and an equality impact assessment undertaken as part of the development of any new or changed statutory data requirement.</p>
15	<p>Establish a communications programme to reduce stigma and increase understanding of the causes and solutions to homelessness</p> <p>WG to establish an ongoing communications programme aligned to the Outcomes Framework and aimed at reframing perceptions on a universal basis about homelessness and supporting delivery of the policy approach. The programme should have a national focus, but be suitable for adaptation to specific</p>	<p>WG, LAs, RSLs and housing delivery partners</p> <p>WG will be the primary lead, engaging other partners in this work.</p>	<p>Short term – new WG communications campaign to be commissioned in Autumn 21</p> <p>Medium term – communications programme established</p>	<p>Welsh Government has allocated £250,000 of the Homelessness Prevention Budget in 2020/21 to support this work.</p> <p>This work will be delivered initially through policy officials and officers within relevant organisations, but also include specialist communications experts. A critical element of the work will require the input of people who have had</p>

	<p>regional issues / audiences, including young people, where possible as part of elements of learning and education, as well as wider communications for adults. We will ensure the communications programme is accessible to those with all access requirements.</p>			<p>experience of homelessness.</p>
16	<p>Empower people with lived experience to influence policy and practice</p> <p>WG to provide opportunities for people with lived experience to influence policy at National Advisory Board and through partners</p> <p>LAs, RSLs and third sector to develop mechanisms to involve people with lived experience in design, recruitment, delivery and evaluation of services</p>	<p>WG, LAs, RSLs, Third Sector</p>	<p>Short to medium term</p>	<p>Resources will be provided through administrative budgets of respective partners</p>