



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

CYHOEDDIAD

Bwrdd Cynggori Cenedlaethol ar Gymorth Tai: 25 Mawrth 2021

Cofnodion o'r cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd 25 Mawrth 2021.

Cyhoeddwyd gyntaf: 28 Medi 2021

Diweddarwyd ddiwethaf: 28 Medi 2021

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Cynnwys

Present

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Emma Williams, Director of Housing and Regeneration introduction

3. Terms of Reference

4. Draft Work Plan for the Housing Support National Advisory Board 2021-22

5. Meeting Dates for 2021

6. Close

Present

Jon Sparkes (JS), Chair

Alicja Zalesinska (AZ), Tai Pawb

Chris Jennings (CJ), HMPPS in Wales

Clare Budden (CB), Clwyd Alun

Clarissa Corbisiero (CC), Community Housing Cymru

Douglas Haig (DH), NRLA Wales

Fiona Kinghorn (FK), Chair of Cardiff & Vale APB

Jonathan Griffiths (JG), President, ADSS Cymru

Josie Smith (JStH), Public Health Wales

Katie Dalton (KD), Cymorth Cymru

Naomi Alleyne (NA), WLGA

Richard Eynon (RE), Independent

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Ruth Power (RP), Shelter Cymru
Sam Parry (SP), Housing Leadership Cymru
Shubha Sangal, Independent
Sian Morgan (SM), Hafan Cymru
Versha Sood Mahindra (VSM), Independent
Wendy Hughes, Digartref
Emma Williams (EW), Welsh Government
Amelia John (AJ), Welsh Government
Tracey Breheny (TB), Welsh Government
Angharad Rogers (AR), Welsh Government
Meinir Edwards (ME), Welsh Government

Apologies:

Joanne Sims, Youth Service, Blaenau Gwent
CC Pam Kelly, Gwent Police
Shayne Hembrow, Wales and West
Alistair Davey, Welsh Government
Sarah Rhodes, Welsh Government

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Advisory Board. Members introduced themselves.

2. Emma Williams, Director of Housing and Regeneration introduction

EM thanked the Chair and members for giving their time to join the Advisory Board. Membership is wide and diverse, which is most welcomed and reflective of the collaborative working that has happened during the pandemic.

EM explained that unfortunately the Minister for Housing and Local Government

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was unable to attend the meeting due to the rules around the pre- election period, which started today.

EM reflected on the changes that has happened over the past year due to the pandemic, referring to the 'everyone in' approach, temporary suspension of priority need, and measures to support people with no recourse to public funds. EM acknowledged the extraordinary efforts made by local authorities and partners in responding collaboratively to the pandemic and getting people sleeping rough into temporary accommodation. She also acknowledged the successful joint working between the capital and policy housing teams in Welsh Government during the past year in administering the Phase 2 capital and revenue transformation grants.

EM gave a brief overview of the numbers of people sleeping rough pre-Covid. Data shows that there were 59 rough sleepers in January 2021 and approximately 1,000 homelessness presentations are being made each month. Reference was also made to the £50 million investment made this financial year which will create approximately 600 temporary and permanent homes.

EM talked about some of the continuing challenges/priorities this year:

- The importance of continuing the collaborative and joined up working between revenue and capital grants that has taken place over the past year.
- New ways of how the Social Housing Grant is being used. This year development of social housing will be based on a standards viability model, which will open up opportunities to fund the right house in the right place. New requirements for authorities to undertake a Local Housing Needs Assessment and produce a Housing Prospectus. Welsh Government will be working with partners on this matter over the next couple of months.
- Re-thinking of town centres and how to utilise properties following the closure of many retail outfits.
- The focus on the quality of homes – there needs to be a balance between the need for homes being built quickly but that they are of high quality.
- Transformation agenda and the move to a rapid rehousing approach. There has been a commitment to 'no turning back' from where we've got to over the last 12 months, with a shift to rapid rehousing and a clear focus on investing in dignified temporary and interim options, person centred support

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and setting people up for success.

- Dealing with the impact of factors such as lifting the ban on evictions, the draw of the streets for some people, economic pressures on families and B&B's and Hotels returning to trade will all have an impact on homelessness services and the housing support sector.
- The need to ensure that there is joined up response to crisis support – this is not just about housing. Need to work with all partners across different sectors.

EM emphasised the important role of the Board and thanked Jon for agreeing to Chair. She wished the Board well with their work.

3. Terms of Reference

The draft Terms of Reference was discussed and following points/changes were raised:

Role of the Board

- The ToR needs to make reference to equality and diversity. Need to ensure that advice made by the Board takes account of the Welsh Government Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) and meets the diverse nature of society and addresses the inequalities that certain groups face.
- The board should be considering relevant international research as well as national research when providing advice to the Minister. (4th bullet)
- Need to ensure that the ToR reflect that the Board will be considering cross government issues and provide cross-Ministerial advice.
- Include reference to the need for policy advice to be seen through a population health lens.
- CB commented that that TOR may need to be reviewed post-election depending on how new government organises itself.

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Membership

- Community Housing Cymru (CHC) – they represent housing associations in Wales not just social housing – amend wording in the membership section to reflect this.
- Suggestions were made with regards to Local Authority representation and inviting the Chair of the Housing Strategy Network.
- It was also felt that there should be a WG representative on the Board from the Children and Communities Grant and tackling poverty.
- JG confirmed that he could be the link to the Heads of Children’s Services Board via ADSS.
- JS emphasised how important it is for members to be communicating with relevant Networks outside of the Board on issues/actions raised.

Terms of Appointment

AJ explained that a number of questions had been raised about the terms of appointment for members and confirmed the following position:

- The terms and conditions of appointment have a section on Political Activity and some members were concerned, as campaigning organisations, that this may fetter their ability to campaign and comment on different policies. AJ confirmed that the terms and conditions would not do this – for those who had raised the issue, their organisations require staff to be politically neutral anyway, and we would expect them to campaign as normal; the provision is in relation to party political activity, which would require Board members to resign from the Board.
- Members also raised concerns re: the T&Cs referring to ‘assist the Chair in securing consensus in the Board’s deliberations’. AJ has discussed with the Chair and agreed that this will be ‘where possible’ in recognition of the fact that it may not be possible to reach consensus on some issues.

a) Welsh Government to amend the ToR to reflect the comments made and circulate a revised draft to Board members. To be agreed at the next meeting.

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4. Draft Work Plan for the Housing Support National Advisory Board 2021-22

- AJ explained that the Homelessness Prevention Team will be developing an Action Plan to submit to the next Assembly Administration, setting out the priorities and action required this year for tackling and preventing homelessness, and was keen to hear the views and priorities of the Board to inform the plan. The Plan will need to be finalised post-election period.
- AJ explained that the main challenges this year will be about Covid recovery, WG's transformational shift to a rapid rehousing approach which is underpinned by the recommendations by the Homelessness Action Group (HAG), and improving the data and individual level data that is available to inform policy planning and advice.
- The Board provided the following feedback to the immediate and short term priorities/issues:
 - Can't just be about prevention – there are still Rough Sleepers out there that need housing and support.
 - 'Upstream'/prevention/ACEs. Need to ensure education and public services consider rights based approach.
 - Important that data is available which will enable better evidence based policy decision making. AJ confirmed that WG had recently published latest data on persons placed into Temporary Accommodation and Rough Sleepers. <https://gov.wales/homelessness-accommodation-provision-and-rough-sleeping-january-2021>
 - Data modelling - the modelling/projections of homelessness over the next 6-9 months are vital if we are to develop meaningful short term action. Also need for modelling to disaggregate by diversity of need, and associated requirement for community health and mental health support responsive to need over same time period.
 - The need for better and affordable housing for young people.
 - Lack of 1 bedroom accommodation. Housing needs to be affordable – the HB doesn't meet rent requirements.
 - No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is a big concern. Need to consider what accommodation and support is available especially with the widening of dispersal areas. Envisage that from June onwards that there

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will be an increase in refugees and asylum seekers that will be made homeless. JS agreed to share a link to the Scottish approach recently announced.

- Needs to be better alignment between rapid rehousing and social housing. Need to assess the support needs emerging from the rapid rehousing plans.
- As recommended by the HAG, there should be an outcomes framework for ending homeless. HAG Rec 1 – the outcomes framework needs to link to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. JS, VS and JStH said that they would be happy to help with this work.
- Workforce pay and development is key. Better pay and conditions for the sector required. We need to demonstrate that the workforce is valued and make it a more attractive sector to work in and seen as a great career opportunity. Also need to ensure the workforce feel supported and receive sufficient training and therapeutic support. AZ commented that there still appears to be a gender pay gap in the sector, particularly in organisation with big care and support arms.
- Need to build on lessons learnt from responding to the pandemic.
- Need to ensure that the engagement and support that has been in place over the past year is maintained and not lost for those people who wouldn't have normally engaged with support previous to pandemic.
- Robust message when new Government is in place about the importance of cross-Government approach to tackling homelessness.
- Need to look at allocation policies and the advice from WG. There needs to be a balance between housing people in the best location with the support services that are available. Important to have a joined up approach to allocation.
- Specific issues relating to rural Wales such as diminishing stock of private accommodation. Holiday lets that have been used to house homeless people during the pandemic will revert to their day to day business as restrictions ease.
- Private Rented Sector (PRS) is still a big concern.
- Evictions – SP said that they are already starting to see an increase in the issuing of Section 21 notices.
 - More PRS landlord shifting to other sectors, such as holiday lets, creating a shortage of PRS stock.

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- DH commented that there needs to be support for landlords as well as tenants when the restrictions ease. There is also a lack of appropriate support for landlords who have difficult tenancies.
- DH said that whilst the tenancy saver loan support scheme has been a positive step, in reality it has not been fit for purpose - take up has been small and success rate low. If it had worked then there would be decrease in evictions.
- DH added that there was a need for better data for PRS, and they have been calling for Welsh Housing Survey to be conducted.
- Support for prison leavers – need to prepare people leaving custody for tenancy – access and maintaining tenancy. They do receive training but it needs to be improved and boundaries removed.
- Need to increase awareness with the general public around homelessness and where to go for support.
- NA suggested that there needs to be a communication and engagement plan to sit along the Action Plan outlining how the plan will be implemented, monitored and communicated, and how to get other stakeholders involved. The action plan will need to link in with the goals of the Future Generations and Wellbeing Act.
- TB suggested that the Action Plan needs to reference the 'dependencies' which lie in other policy areas (e.g. good accessible mental health and SM services).
- AJ thanked everyone for their feedback. The Action Plan will be drafted and shared for comment, and will inform discussions at the next Board meeting around which aspects of the plan the Board can take forward and inform their own work programme.

b) Welsh Government will draft an action plan and share with the Board for comment and to discuss at next meeting.

c) JS to share a link to the Scottish approach to NRPF recently announced.

5. Meeting Dates for 2021

ME (secretariat) will seek member's availability and agree future dates for

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meetings.

d) ME to circulate a choice of meeting dates to seek availability of Board members.

6. Close

Chair thanked all the members of the Board for their contributions.

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Ynghylch y ddogfen hon

Mae'r ddogfen hon yn gopi o'r dudalen we [Bwrdd Cyngori Cenedlaethol ar Gymorth Tai: 25 Mawrth 2021](#) a lawrlwythwyd.

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Efallai na fydd y ddogfen hon yn hollol hygyrch; darllenwch ein [datganiad hygyrchedd](#) i gael rhagor o wybodaeth.

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