

## **Agenda – Local Government and Housing Committee**

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Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 3, Senedd**

Meeting date: 7 May 2025

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

**Manon George**

Committee Clerk

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### **Hybrid**

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#### **Private pre-meeting**

08.45 – 09.00

#### **1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**

09.00

#### **2 The role of local authorities in supporting hospital discharges: Evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and the Minister for Children and Social Care**

09.00 – 10.30

(Pages 1 – 42)

Jeremy Miles MS, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Welsh Government

Dawn Bowden MS, Minister for Children and Social Care, Welsh Government

Taryn Stephens, Deputy Director Social Services Improvement, Welsh Government

Shelley Davies, Deputy Director Futures & Integration, Welsh Government

Attached Documents:

Research brief

Paper 1: The role of local authorities in supporting hospital discharges – summary of roundtable discussions



Paper 2: The role of local authorities in supporting hospital discharges – written evidence from Welsh Government

### **3 Papers to note**

10.30

#### **3.1 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025–26**

(Pages 43 – 44)

Attached Documents:

Paper 3: Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025–26 – Letter from the Chair of Finance Committee

#### **3.2 Social housing supply**

(Pages 45 – 47)

Attached Documents:

Paper 4: Social housing supply – correspondence with the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government regarding Cornerstone Place

#### **3.3 Building Safety**

(Pages 48 – 50)

Attached Documents:

Paper 5: Building Safety – Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

#### **3.4 Housing support for vulnerable people**

(Pages 51 – 57)

Attached Documents:

Paper 6: Housing support for vulnerable people – additional information from Welsh Government

#### **3.5 P-06–1483 – Give neighbours their say when holiday let owners start applying for licences**

(Pages 58 – 61)

Attached Documents:

Paper 7: P-06–1483 – Give neighbours their say when holiday let owners

start applying for licences – Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

### **3.6 The provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers**

(Pages 62 – 83)

Attached Documents:

Paper 8: The provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers – Welsh Government response

### **3.7 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025–26**

(Pages 84 – 86)

Attached Documents:

Paper 9: Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025–26 – Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

## **4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting and for the meeting on 22 May**

10.30

### **Break**

10.30 – 10.45

### **Private meeting**

10.30 – 12.25

## **5 The role of local authorities in supporting hospital discharges: consideration of evidence and key issues**

10.45 – 11.45

## **6 Housing support for vulnerable people: consideration of draft report**

11.45 – 12.25

(Pages 87 – 107)

Attached Documents:

Paper 10: Housing support for vulnerable people – draft report

## **7 Forward work programme**

12.25 – 12.30

(Pages 108 – 111)

Attached Documents:

Paper 11: Forward work programme

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted



# Local Government & Housing Committee

## The Role of Local Government in Supporting Hospital Discharges

07/05/2025

Hospital discharges are a critical component of patient care, ensuring that individuals transition smoothly from hospital to home or another care setting. Local government play a pivotal role in this process, particularly through the role of their social services departments.

This paper explores the various ways local government provide vital support to the hospital discharge process, as well as the ongoing challenges, and the future support and closer ways of working we seek to adopt to jointly overcome these obstacles.

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## Local Government – Key Social Care Functions

Local government partners provide a range of social care services, including home care, community support, and residential care placements. These services are essential for some individuals who need ongoing assistance with daily activities and care after leaving hospital.

Local authorities, primarily through social services, work to ensure safe, timely, and efficient discharges from hospitals.

### Coordination of Care

Effective hospital discharge requires seamless coordination between local government social services and healthcare providers.

### Assessments

Local Government is responsible for assessing the care needs of patients who are ready to be discharged from the hospital. This involves evaluating the patient's physical, emotional, and social needs to develop a comprehensive care plan that ensures their safety and well-being at home.

### Domiciliary Support

Domiciliary support is the provision of care and support to people due to their vulnerability or need at the place where they live. Local government may commission domiciliary support services or provide them directly. Domiciliary support services are regulated under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

### Reablement

Reablement is defined in regulation 1 of the Care and Support (Charging) (Wales) Regulations 2015, as care and support provided or arranged by local government, for a specified period, enabling persons to maintain or regain the ability needed to live independently in their only or main home. Regulation 4 prohibits local government from charging for reablement services provided for a period of up to six weeks.

### Residential Care

Care home services provide accommodation, together with nursing or care, in Wales to adults and children because of their vulnerability or need. Local government may commission care home services or, where they do not include nursing, provide them directly. Care home services are regulated under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

### Intermediate Care Services

Intermediate care services, which are run by local government, for a period of no more than 16 weeks per individual, are exempted from having to register as a care home service, if the care and support is provided by the area's registered domiciliary support provider and the accommodation is vested in the local government.

## Joint working arrangements between Local Government and Welsh Government

Local Government are a key partner and vital contributor to the development of a number of policy initiatives aimed at supporting hospital flow and discharge.

### Local Government Support in Developing Discharge Reporting

Formal reporting on hospital flow and discharges had previously been suspended during the pandemic along with several other NHS reporting mechanisms to allow staff to focus on delivering care to patients. In 2022 work commenced to reinstate a reporting framework to begin to record discharge delays. The opportunity was taken to not only restart reporting but to consider ways that we could improve on our data collection.

The reporting framework was developed through 2022 via a joint Expert Group, co-chaired by Welsh government and NHS Executive (formerly NHS Delivery Unit at the time) and comprised membership from health board discharge teams, Digital Healthcare Wales (DHCW) and the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru). We utilised this collaborative approach to the development of the framework to ensure that we had cross-sector input into the development of the new reporting structure. Members discussed and agreed the key decisions undertaken as part of the new framework such as:

- The definition of a delay – the previous reporting system lacked a standard definition for delays, causing variations in reports. It was agreed that a uniform definition will ensure consistency and comparability.
- Timeframes for reporting a delay – alongside the updated definition to record a delay it was agreed that the timeframes included should be attainable but challenging. The Expert Group recognised that we should balance the need to support people to leave hospital promptly, when ready for discharge, against the processes needed to achieve this. This was supported with links to the *Discharge to Recover then Assess (D2RA)* process, which directs staff to allocate patients to a suitable discharge pathway based on their likely ongoing need at discharge and then commence the process to engage those services at the earliest opportunity during the patient's admitted period, rather than leave these to begin once the patient is ready for discharge.
- The delay codes – the Group agreed the full list of updated codes which would present us with a comprehensive list of reasons a person might be delayed. These codes would then help us to review and coordinate efforts on specific processes in each region.

In 2023 we launched a revised approach to collecting hospital discharge data. The *Pathways of Care Reporting Framework*. The new framework was developed with the joint aims to:

- improve patient outcomes.
- benefit service providers and teams.
- be utilised as the key data source to deliver meaningful actions aimed at improving patient outcomes, reduction of system delays and development of services at a regional level.
- provide validated data on discharge performance for All Wales service development and planning purposes.
- provide an expanded reporting framework for Welsh Government, NHS Executive and Ministers.

Local government was instrumental in helping us to develop this work programme and it was recognised at the start of the process that this should not be a reporting framework that was developed in a vacuum. The Expert Group that was established to design the new framework was considered a beneficial collaborative space between health and social care. It was agreed at the request of the membership that the work of the Group be continued beyond the April 2023 implementation date.

The Group has since transitioned to the Development Group that reviews the ongoing utilisation of the reporting framework on a process of continuous improvement. The Group have also been involved in several other initiatives related to hospital discharge performance such as work via the Care Action Committee and the recent 50-Day Integrated Community Care Winter Challenge.

Local government representation remains an essential partner in the ongoing work programme as we continue to explore how we improve and expand hospital discharge and patient flow processes.

## Partnership arrangements

In Wales, partnership arrangements for health and social care are guided by Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This legislation emphasises collaboration between local government and local health boards to improve care and support services. Key aspects include:

- **Regional Partnership Boards:** These boards are established to ensure that health and social care services are integrated and meet the needs of individuals. They focus on improving outcomes, promoting well-being, and making efficient use of resources.
- **Pooled Budgets:** Resources are often combined to deliver integrated services effectively.
- **Person-Centred Care:** The approach prioritises giving individuals more control over their care and ensuring services are coordinated to meet specific needs.

The five-year (to end March 2027) Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund (RIF), with an annual allocation of £146.2m is allocated to the seven **Regional Partnership**

**Boards** (RPBs) to develop six models of integrated care, one of which is Home from Hospital.

Home from Hospital services require health and social care to work together to facilitate **timely discharges**. They work closely with multi agency Community Resource Teams (CRTs), which facilitate co-working across health, social care, and the voluntary sector to help people safely return home from hospital and to enable their recovery within the community. In some CRTs, they work closely with Falls Prevention Teams and with GP practices.

In 2023/24 (2024/25 figures currently being finalised at year end), the RIF allocation for this model of care was £34m across a range of health, social care and third sector projects including hospital discharge provision/teams, supporting unpaid carers and voluntary sector Home from Hospital support services. This equates to 28.2% of the total allocation of the RIF.

The RIF also funds models of care that are preventing people's health and care needs from escalating and avoiding preventable conveyance and admission to hospital. For example, the Complex Care Closer to Home model is funding projects (involving local government) and supporting people with more complex needs to remain and have their care needs met at home. The allocation for this model, across the RPBs is £20.6m (equating to 17.1% of the RIF).

The Community Co-ordination Model of Care is also assisting with building capacity in our system with £32.8m (27.%) being allocated to projects and services. This model focuses on prevention and early intervention with activities such as social prescribing and community-led support being core components as well as micro-enterprise home support and falls prevention services to ensure that people are able to stay at home without the need for a secondary care intervention.

## **50 Day Integrated Care Winter Challenge and Care Action Committee**

In July 2024, the Ministerially led Care Action Committee set 3 national ambitions for health and local government partners to jointly achieve:

- Reduce pathways of care delays (PoCDs)
- Increase district and palliative care nursing hours on weekends
- Increase the count of people (at home and in care homes) benefiting from step care as a safe alternative to conveyance/hospital admission, and step-down care from hospital

To accelerate the work needed to achieve these ambitions, Care Action Committee launched the 50 Day Integrated Care Winter Challenge on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The Challenge provided health and social care partners with 50 days to review and evaluate their systems against 10 best practice interventions and to make necessary improvements (including the aim to reduce PoCDs). While some of these interventions will take longer to fully implement, each health and social care partner developed a clear understanding of their performance and a shared action plan by the end of the Challenge.

Local government played an equal role with NHS partners in delivering services that aligned with the majority of the 10 best practice interventions e.g.

**Intervention 1** - Refresh focus on embedding the Optimal Hospital Flow Framework to include a proactive emphasis on rehabilitation and reablement across the Health & Social Care system.

**Intervention 2** - Apply 7-day Health & Social Care working to enable discharge of patients during the weekend.

**Intervention 4** - Regional collaboration to ensure that 'integrated navigation hubs' exist to facilitate discharge for acute hospital sites and admission avoidance in the community.

**Intervention 5** - Regional Health & Social Care weekly review of Lengths of Stay (LOS) 21-28 days and 20 longest LOS patients with focused actions to progress discharge.

**Intervention 8** - Trusted Assessor model for all care settings.

**Intervention 9** - Home First default for all patients clinically optimised – Health and Social Care discharge planning begins on admission.

**Intervention 10** - Integrated community services to focus on 7-day community-based falls response pathways.

To achieve success in these areas of work, no single organisation or sector can drive meaningful change alone; it's the collective effort between health and social care and the wider third sector partners that makes a difference. This shared responsibility is vital, not only to tackle immediate issues like PoCDs, but also to strengthen community provisions that proactively reduce the need for hospital admissions. This can be achieved through the implementation of the Integrated Community Care System (ICCS) for Wales.

## **Integrated Community Care System for Wales**

The developing Integrated Community Care System (ICCS) is intended to deliver on the ambitions of *A Healthier Wales*. It aims to enhance the health and well-being of the people of Wales by integrating health and social care services, increasing care and support options for people in the community as a safe alternative to hospital admission and support timely discharge from hospital when further care and support in the community is needed.

The first iteration of the ICCS blueprint was developed through cross-sector work, under the Rebalancing Care and Support programme as part of the work to clarify and strengthen the role of RPBs. Local authorities were a key stakeholder in its development and have been an active participant in developing the ICCS since its inception.

The ICCS is designed to unify the objectives of the three major health and care programmes in Wales: the Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC), the Strategic Programme for Primary Care, and the Regional Integration Fund (RIF). Additionally, the "Building Capacity through Community Care – Further Faster" initiative and learning from the 50-Day Integrated Care Winter Challenge supports the vision of integrated community care.

## **Partnership working to tackle Pathways of Care**

In 2024 we engaged with regional partners to set out trajectory targets to reduce hospital discharge delays. The trajectories were discussed and agreed through the Care Action Committee, which is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and comprises members from health boards and local government.

The ambition with the trajectories was to set challenging but realistic targets for regions to work towards jointly, and we're focused on the 3 key aims of the total number of delays, the total number of assessment related delays and the total number of days delayed. The Pathways of Care Delays trajectory targets set for 2024/2025, along with outcomes in March, were to:

- Reduce total delays by 15%, which has been exceeded with a 17% reduction achieved.
- Reduce specific assessment related delays by 20% was exceeded, with a 22% reduction achieved.
- Our target of reducing total number of days delayed, also set at 20%, has unfortunately not been achieved, however we have seen a 12% reduction on the baseline for the target.

Oversight of progress was maintained through a combination of the Care Action Committee meetings and monthly regional meetings with health and social care teams. These provided us with the opportunity to review activity and explore examples of best practice and partnership working. The progress towards the targets was also supported through the interventions within the 50-day challenge outlined above. This was also supported with £10m in funding to local government over the winter period to increase community capacity and reablement services.

These initiatives helped to support and focus regional partners, including local government, to improve discharge support services and community services which tackled the dual purpose of supporting discharge processes and front door admission avoidance.

Through this action we saw an improved approach to discharge delays over the winter period where, historically, we had seen significant incremental increases in discharge delays in the January to March period. From December 2023 to March 2024, we saw a rise of +300 delays, however for the December 2024 to March 2025 position we have reported a reduction of -52.

Local government teams were vital in the delivery of progress towards the trajectory targets. Of the 278 reductions of discharge delays that were achieved between March 2024 and March 2025, 199 of these were social care related codes. This represents over 71% of the improvements that we have seen in relation to the total number of delays.

## The Scale of Challenges

In recent years we have introduced mechanisms to help us review and understand the trends, shape and scale of the challenges being faced by both health and social care sectors. These reports help us to determine where progress is being made as well as issues affecting service delivery. This information has been instrumental in helping us collectively determine the areas that need the most attention.

### Social Care Performance and Improvement Framework Data

During the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024:

- 125,112 contacts were received by statutory social services for information, advice and assistance (IAA) services for adults who were not receiving care and support, or support (as a carer) at the time of the contact. This is an increase of approximately 2% from 2022-23.
- 69,379 new contacts for adults received by statutory social services during the year were provided with advice or assistance. This represents about 55% of all new contacts in 2023-24 (where data was provided). In 2022-23, there were 70,256 new contacts which were provided with advice or assistance, representing about 58% of all new contacts in that year (where data was provided).
- 69,676 new assessments were completed for adults who did not already have a care and support plan, a decrease from 74,417 in 2022-23. Where recorded, 37% of assessments in 2023-24 concluded the adult had eligible needs which could only be met with a care and support plan, compared to 34% in 2022-23.
- 9,327 packages of reablement were completed by adults, compared to 8,666 in 2022-23. In 2023-24, 86% of completed packages reduced, maintained or mitigated the need for support following the period of reablement, compared to 83% in 2022-23.
- 25,492 reports of an adult suspected of being at risk (of abuse or neglect) were received, compared to 21,951 in 2022-23. Where the category of alleged abuse was provided, 34% of reports alleged abuse under the category of neglect (more than one category may be suspected in a report).

On 31 March 2024, 48,519 adults had a care and support plan. Of which, 13% had a care and support plan supported using a Direct Payment. In comparison, 47,428 adults had a care and support plan on 31 March 2023, of which 12% were supported using a Direct Payment (however one local government region did not provide data in 2022-23).

2024-25

Taking Wales as a whole over the past 12 months, the number of people in receipt of domiciliary care has increased, though the number of people waiting for domiciliary care has reduced on a national level.

An all-Wales overview of reablement shows an increase in the number of people receiving this service during the past 12 months and an increase in waiting lists.

It should be noted that this is based on local government data reported to Welsh Government and refers to the totality of delivery of domiciliary care and reablement commissioned or delivered by local government (not including care that is entirely self-funded). It does not solely refer to care delivered to people being discharged from hospital.

### **Pathways of Care Data**

Overall, the key pressures and challenges that local government are facing, as identified through the Pathways of Care Delays monthly reporting data, is in supporting timely hospital discharge associated with:

- social care assessment functions,
- workforce provision and
- care capacity.

Predominantly, the availability of social workers to allocate to patients and subsequently undertake social care needs assessments has had an impact on the discharge process enabling patients to leave as soon as they are clinically optimised to do so.

In addition, local government's ability to provide or commission new home care packages, owing to limited availability, has impacted the discharge process and overall delays numbers. This is also the position with residential care home places and reablement care package that aid a person's post discharge recovery at home.

A collaborative approach between local government and health boards remains key to reducing discharge delay numbers and maintaining an improved position on tackling these and other joint led delay areas. Data has confirmed that over the current Pathways of Care Delays reporting year (ended March 2025), there has been a significant reduction in hospital discharge delay numbers related to social worker allocation and the completion of social care assessments, particularly over the final quarter. This is a very encouraging position in view of the additional pressures placed on services and staffing levels over the winter period.

## Future Support and developing closer working relationships

As we continue to build on the joint successes, we have been able to deliver improvements to patient flow and hospital discharge. We will ensure that we are providing further opportunities to support the sector, work closely to form new partnership ways of working and co-produce future policy. We will work to support local government in their efforts to support people and patients.

### **£30m Pathways of Transformation Grant.**

The services provided by local government are a vital component in the discharge arrangements for many people leaving hospital. The scale of demand and complexity of the support needed has been shown to be growing, and with the ageing demographics within many regions in Wales, it is only likely to increase in future years.

In recognition of the need for targeted support we are allocating £30m in 2025/26 through a Pathways of Care Transformation Grant to local government to boost investment in community-based social care.

The grant will support activity towards timely assessment and provide packages of care to ensure people can leave hospital when they are clinically optimised, helping to reduce the level of delayed hospital discharges. The fund will also be utilised to strengthen community-based care services to support people to stay well at home.

### **Enhanced Partnership and Collaboration – Local Government Strategic Partnership Agreement**

We will continue to work closely with our local government partners to develop refreshed partnership arrangements through a strategic partnership agreement. The intention is that this will include a shared commitment focused on hospital discharge and pathways of care. The shared priority outcomes of this agreement are designed to drive fundamental and meaningful change in a number of key service areas which are important to the people of Wales. These outcomes will be monitored.

## **Adoption of Best Practices**

There are clear benefits to adopting best practices and innovative approaches to hospital discharge. This includes implementing standardised assessment tools, utilising technology for care coordination, and learning from successful models across regions.

**Care Homes Wales Project**, local government are encouraged to use the public facing website [www.carehomes.wales](http://www.carehomes.wales) and series of dashboards which present data about adult care homes and their vacancies. This project is funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by Data Cymru.

The Healthcare and Wellbeing Framework for care homes is being developed and will set out what good looks like in terms of healthcare and wellbeing services for people living in care homes. This will include how health services and social care services will work together to achieve better outcomes and seeks to embed ways of working that are prevention focused, promote more care being provided in the home, reduce the need for hospital admissions and establish mutually respectful, robust relationships across health and social care.

During the recent engagement activities we have undertaken with stakeholders, multiple examples of innovative best practice were shared and will be included in the framework document that is currently being drafted. We have agreed with stakeholders that we will establish a community of practice to support implementation of the framework, the sharing of best practice and exploration of how models of best practice could be scaled up.

**The Strategic Domiciliary Care Group**, comprising local government, health board and provider representation is working with the Welsh Government to identify means to increase the sustainability of domiciliary care in Wales. Workstreams are exploring aspects of commissioning and employment arrangements and the extent to which this may support staff retention and provider stability.

We currently provide £1m of ringfenced funding to health boards to ensure carer support services within hospitals and discharge guidance outlines the importance of involving unpaid carers in discharge planning. The Welsh Government provides additional funding for the training of healthcare staff to be more aware of the needs of unpaid carers. Local government fulfilling their statutory duties toward the support of unpaid carers is an important factor in their support of hospital discharges more widely.

### **Joint planning and commissioning between health and social care partners through Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs),**

RPBs are well established and implementing statutory duties to deliver partnership arrangements in relation to joint planning, commissioning, collaboration and integrated working. RPBs are also required to produce annual reports which provide an opportunity to share learning and identify further good practice, which will support the strengthening of planning and commissioning arrangements.

There are further opportunities to increase planning and understanding of population needs through review of Population Needs Assessments. The National Office for Care and Support have published a national framework for commissioning care to deliver national principles and standards for commissioning care and support. The review of RPB Market

Stability Reports also provide opportunities to actively shape commissioning strategies and provider provision to secure the right services and support for people in the right place, at the right time.

There is continued investment from the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) through RPBs supporting joint commissioning arrangements as we move forward with an Integrated Community Care System for Wales, but longer-term consideration will be required when the fund ends in March 2027. The RIF is underpinned by the development of six Models of Care and is further supported by national Communities of Practice which bring partners together to share learning and provide an opportunity to upscale and share good practice across Wales.

Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee  
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee  
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International  
Relations Committee  
Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee  
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee  
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee  
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee  
Chair, Chair's Forum

1 April 2025

Dear Committee Chairs,

### Scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2025-26: Evidence provided by the Welsh Government

In our [report](#) on the scrutiny of the [Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26](#), we made several recommendations relating to budget presentation improvements. We also agreed to consult Committees on the documentation provided by the Welsh Government alongside its Draft Budget proposals, concluding that:

*"Conclusion 1. The Committee will consult Senedd committees involved in budget scrutiny ahead of the Welsh Spending Review and the 2026-27 budget round to explore ways to maximise budgetary scrutiny in the Senedd, in order to mitigate the impact of a curtailed scrutiny window."*

As a result, in reflecting on this year's budget scrutiny experience and in seeking improvements to the budget documentation provided by the Welsh Government at the 2026-27 Draft Budget and beyond, I would be grateful for the views of your committee in response to the following questions:

- What improvements would you like to see in the Welsh Government's Draft Budget documentation and subsequent ministerial written evidence? Please make reference to the

timeliness, quality and usefulness of any documentation and/or evidence received in your response.

- Given the UK Spending Review, which is due to be published on 11 June 2025, will provide indicative funding for the Welsh Government future years, do you have any views on information you would require regarding a subsequent Welsh Spending Review, either along with budget documentation or as a separate exercise?

We would appreciate responses by **Friday 23 May 2025**. Your views will then be collated and fed back to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, for his consideration in advance of the Budget Priorities 2026-27 Plenary debate that will be led by the Finance Committee and take place before summer recess.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS  
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

—  
**Local Government  
and Housing Committee**

—  
**Welsh Parliament**

Jayne Bryant MS  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government  
Welsh Government

17 March 2025

Dear Jayne,

**Cornerstone Place**

On Thursday 13 March 2025 I met with David Ball and Richard Kennedy, co-founders of Cornerstone Place. Cornerstone Place is a social enterprise that focuses on transforming unused land and buildings into affordable homes for local authorities, registered providers and charities. They explained that they have done a lot of work recently with local authorities in England unlocking their infill sites and shared examples of this work including Net Zero homes.

As you know, in our report on [Social Housing Supply](#) we recommended that the Welsh Government work with local authorities on unlocking the potential of smaller sites within existing communities. During our inquiry we heard that smaller sites are sometimes overlooked, because they are not always seen as viable by housing providers or developers, and that the Local Development Plan process may favour larger sites. We also heard that the Local Housing Market Assessments are returning high levels of one-bed need. We therefore recommended that the Welsh Government proactively works with local authorities and housing associations to address the need for one-bed homes, and that this approach should make the most of acquisitions, remodelling and infill sites to provide homes within existing mixed communities as much as possible.

Given the Welsh Government's target of 20,000 low carbon homes for rent and the need to explore all options to increase suitable supply, Cornerstone Place's work may be of interest to you.

I am copying this letter to Lee Waters MS as Chair of the Affordable Homes Task Force.

Yours sincerely,

John

John Griffiths MS  
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Jayne Bryant AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: LG&HC - Cornerstone Place

John Griffiths MS  
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee  
[SeneddHousing@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddHousing@senedd.wales)

3 April 2025

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 17 March highlighting the social enterprise Cornerstone Place.

You will note that in my response to the Local Government and Housing Committee's inquiry into social housing, I accepted the recommendation to unlock the potential of smaller sites within existing communities.

The Welsh Government has sought to increase the use of small sites, as very often they are previously developed land and they assist in broadening housing delivery options, especially for SME builders. Planning Policy Wales is clear in that planning authorities should set a locally determined target for the delivery of housing on small sites.

To facilitate this, planning authorities should maintain a register of suitable sites which fall below the threshold for allocation in their development plan. Planning authorities should also work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.

I am committed to exploring all opportunities for building homes quicker and have committed to using every lever possible to deliver more homes.

I have asked my officials to contact David Ball and/ or Richard Kennedy, co-founders of Cornerstone Place to arrange a meeting to discuss the potential of using smaller sites within existing communities.

Yours sincerely,

**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

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[Correspondence.Jayne.Bryant@gov.Wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jayne.Bryant@gov.Wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PO/JB/145/2025  
Ein cyf/Our ref PO/JB/145/2025

4 April 2025

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 March 2025 in relation to a meeting you had with members of the Welsh Cladiators. As a Government, we remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting residents and leaseholders through a robust building safety programme that addresses existing issues but also delivers fundamental reform to the Building Safety regime in Wales.

On 31 March, an update on the remediation programme was provided in the Building Safety Programme newsletter. There are currently 448 buildings of 11m and over identified in Wales, 187 of these are complete or have works on site, 225 have not yet started, but plans are in place and works will begin as quickly as possible. Six (6) buildings have been confirmed as not requiring work. These figures are subject to change as further buildings are identified. More information is available in the latest newsletter.

I can confirm all buildings in Wales found to have Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) cladding, which was the material that clad the Grenfell Tower, have had this removed. I can assure you that progress is being made to remediate remaining internal and external fire safety issues as quickly as possible.

Buildings are only reported as complete in Wales when both internal and external fire safety remediation is complete. For this reason, and as you point to in your letter, the data released by England is not directly comparable. Its focus has been on buildings above 18m and with external cladding issues only.

The scale and scope of our programme is very different to that in place in England. As attractive as drawing comparisons is, it simply isn't possible. With regard to progress of remediation in buildings for whom developers are responsible, I would again point to the differences between the two programmes and, due to the way the data is collated and presented, they are not directly comparable. If you or the Committee wishes to receive more in depth information, I would be happy for my officials to provide a technical briefing on the data here in Wales.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I can confirm as of March, of the 152 developer-responsible buildings identified as having either internal and/or external fire safety issues:

- forty-two percent (42%) have either been completed or works have started
- sixty-six percent (66%) have plans in place to begin remediation, subject to surveys, tendering, permissions etc., and
- 5% have no plans in place to start works but are awaiting the review of available information to determine whether works are required

I have always been clear that developers should step-up to their responsibilities and put right fire safety issues in buildings they have developed over the past 30 years. Our programme is making good progress, but clearly there is more to do, and I would like to see an injection of pace for all buildings. Last November I set developers a 6 month target date for assessing and planning remediation works on all buildings they are responsible for in Wales. All developers that have signed a contract with the Welsh Government agreed to this timeframe. We are closely tracking progress against this target date, and I will meet with developers again in June to assess their compliance and continue to impress upon them the urgency in progressing works.

To date, there has been no breach of the contract terms between the Welsh Government and developers. As part of the monitoring process, should officials suspect a material breach has occurred, the Welsh Government will instigate the appropriate legal action – this will not fall to leaseholders.

You asked what steps the Welsh Government is taking to ensure surveys are shared with leaseholders and residents. All surveys procured and paid for by the Welsh Government can be shared with responsible persons and/or leaseholders who request them for information purposes. Where leaseholders or residents have requested a copy of the survey report for their building, we have provided this to them.

Our programme is specifically looking to address fire safety issues, and developers are obligated to assess the extent of these issues. In most cases this assessment takes the form of a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and /or a Fire Risk Assessment External Walls (FRAEW). Developers are sharing this information once the reports are available. However, we cannot compel developers to share reports that relate to non-fire safety issues.

You ask for information in relation to the extent of work carried out in Wales by Tri Fire. I can confirm that Tri Fire has not been used by the Welsh Government and has never been on an approved list in Wales to undertake surveys.

We are aware of 41 buildings where Tri Fire was contracted. All of these buildings will either be subject to a peer review and / or have had surveys from Welsh Government's contractors, which would supersede those undertaken by Tri Fire. No buildings within our programme have been or will be signed off as complete using Tri Fire assessments.

There is a register of EWS1's managed by the Fire Industry Association. This register is limited to buildings over 18m and is not managed or maintained by Government. EWS1 forms were initiated by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors for the finance sector to understand the combustibility of materials used in external wall systems. These forms are not legally required, and the Welsh Government would, therefore, not hold a record of all those issued in Wales.

Our Building Safety (Wales) Bill will be introduced before the summer. The Bill will establish a new regime in Wales covering the occupation and ongoing management of multi-occupied

residential buildings, including robust record keeping requirements. Our regime will empower residents with enhanced rights, clear routes of redress and a stronger voice in matters that affect their homes. More broadly, resident engagement is at the heart of our approach, with an appreciation that lived experiences of leaseholders and residents is incredibly important in helping us understand the challenges and difficulties they are faced with. I would be happy to meet with you and offer a technical briefing with my officials in due course, as we near introduction of the legislation into the Senedd.

My officials meet directly with leaseholder representatives on a regular basis for many developments to discuss remediation plans and progress. However, I have listened to the calls for wider leaseholder and resident engagement, and my officials have worked with the Welsh Cladiators to develop arrangements for a Leaseholder and Resident Group. The Group will seek to complement the existing engagement activity, and will provide the opportunity to network with other leaseholder, as well as to share experiences and feed in issues and concerns so that trends can be identified and influence future Government policy. The first of these meetings will take place later this month.

Thank you for writing to me and bringing these important matters to my attention. If you or the Committee would like further information in response to the points covered, please do take up the offer of a technical briefing with my officials.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PO/JB/146/2025  
Ein cyf/Our ref PO/JB/146/2025

4 April 2025

Dear Chair,

During my appearance at the Local Government and Housing Committee's evidence session on 19 March 2025, I undertook to provide additional information on a number of areas as outlined below.

1. UK Government's changes to Employer National Insurance contributions

As stated at the evidence session, National Insurance is a non-devolved matter. The decision to make changes to employers' National Insurance contributions was taken by the UK Government in the UK Budget last year and came into effect from April.

The UK Government has confirmed it will provide the Welsh Government with funding to cover the increased costs of public sector employer National Insurance contributions. We have previously confirmed any funding will be passed directly to those services. Our initial estimate of the additional National Insurance costs to devolved public sector employers in Wales is £253m.

However, as the Finance Secretary confirmed in the Senedd on 2 April, the UK Treasury has decided to distribute additional funding support to meet the increased costs of public sector employer National Insurance contributions for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales using the Barnett formula. It is our view these costs should be funded in full across the whole UK and should not be based on a Barnett consequential of the costs for the English public sector.

The First Minister raised these concerns when she met the Chancellor and in follow-up correspondence. The Finance Secretary reiterated these concerns to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. He was clear the UK Government should fully fund Welsh public sector employers' National Insurance contributions, in the same way as it plans to do for English public services.

We recognise organisations and businesses commissioned by the public sector to provide services and third sector organisations are concerned about the impact of changes to

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employer National Insurance contributions. The UK Government's analysis shows more than half of employers with National Insurance contribution liabilities will either see no change or will gain overall in 2025.

We continue to make representations to the Treasury.

## 2. Workforce Task and Finish Group

The Workforce Task and Finish Group are due to report back to the Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board at its next two meetings (in April and July), before putting forward final recommendations for Welsh Government's consideration in early autumn. I will write to the Committee in due course with an update on next steps following receipt and consideration of their report.

## 3. Cardiff Homelessness Multidisciplinary team (MDT)

Please find attached a paper at Annex A from Cardiff Council and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, providing information on their joint working via their Cardiff and Vale Health Inclusion Service (CAVHIS) and the Homelessness MDT.

## 4. Rapid rehousing (RRH) task and finish group

The purpose of the RRH Task and Finish Group is to help drive forward and embed RRH across Wales and help support partners that are integral in its delivery. The Group has identified two workstreams:

- **Workstream 1** - Aligning housing supply with the needs of people experiencing homelessness. A 'deep dive' has taken place with three local authorities – Conwy, Cardiff, and Rhondda Cynon Taf - to understand how data and information on the diverse housing needs of households experiencing homelessness is shaping the delivery of local authority plans for new housing. The group will identify good practice and barriers to providing the housing to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. The subgroup will present recommendations to the Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board in summer 2025. The results will then be used to inform updates to Welsh Government Guidance on Rapid Rehousing and Housing supply more generally.
- **Workstream 2** - To focus on communication and raising awareness and understanding of the RRH approach, including the benefits this approach delivers both for people experiencing homelessness, as well as for public services across Wales. The group is planning a national summit in autumn 2025, drawing together key partners from across public services and increasing awareness and buy in for the RRH approach.

## 5. Welsh Government's discussions with the DWP regarding removing financial barriers for young people in supported accommodation to find employment

Welsh Government officials attended a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) workshop in July 2023 with Welsh local authority revenue and benefits representatives. The workshop's purpose was to inform DWP's early development of reform to Housing Benefits for Supported Housing, the subject of its recent consultation (see below). The issue of financial barriers for young people in supported housing was raised by both stakeholders at the session, and by Welsh Government as part of feedback on wider considerations. Welsh Government officials have also raised this issue with DWP officials during discussions in 2024, ahead of the launch of their consultation.

On 20 February 2025 the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and DWP launched their [joint consultation on Supported Housing regulation](#). The consultation is open for 12 weeks until 15 May 2025. Part 2 of the consultation relates to proposed changes to Housing Benefit Regulations for Supported Housing within Great Britain.

While the consultation does not include specific questions on financial barriers for young people in supported accommodation to find employment, Welsh Government will reiterate this overarching feedback as part of the consultation response.

6. Homeless statistics – release from prison

In the last full year of published data (2023-24), 1,548 households reported ‘prison leaver’ as the main reason for loss of last settled home, which represents approximately 11% of the total number of households owed a section 73 duty (households that were homeless, eligible for help and subject to a duty to help to secure accommodation).

Source: Welsh Government [Statutory homelessness data](#)

Thank you once again for the Committee’s interest in this important agenda.

Yours sincerely,



**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

## Additional information for the Local Government and Housing Committee March 2025

### Examples of joint working – Cardiff Council, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

#### Introduction

There are two key services working in partnership to support health inclusion groups in Cardiff who face significant challenges accessing health and social care services: the Cardiff and Vale Health Inclusion Service (CAVHIS) and the Homelessness Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT).

#### a. Homelessness Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

*Funding: Core funding, Housing Support Grant, Complex Needs Funding, Substance Misuse Action Funding (SMAF) and self-organisational funding.*

The Homelessness MDT was established in 2019 to provide therapeutic intervention, support, and treatment to people with complex support needs within homelessness. It focuses on delivering in-depth assessments that lead to person-centred, coordinated support and treatment plans.

The MDT comprises clinicians and practitioners from various organisations, including Cardiff Council, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CAVUHB), Cardiff Addiction Unit (CAU) Cardiff and Vale Drug and Alcohol Service (CAVDAS), Dyfodol, police, and probation.

With some initial funding from Welsh Government this model began as a housing-led initiative in partnership with CAVUHB to demonstrate a proof-of-concept. However, since 2019, significant progress has been made, and there is now clear leadership from CAVUHB to advance this approach and integrate it into mainstream delivery. This is evident from the developments of the Cardiff and Vale Health Inclusion Service outlined below.

#### b. Cardiff and Vale Health Inclusion Service (CAVHIS)

*Funding: CAVUHB.*

CAVHIS is a CAVUHB service designed for groups that face significant challenges when accessing health and social care services. The original CAVHIS model (previously known as Cardiff Health Access Practice) was commissioned to provide public health screening for newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees, as well as GP registration for 3-4 months while individuals are supported into traditional primary care services.

Over the past two years, to better meet the needs of health inclusion groups<sup>1</sup>, CAVHIS has been expanding to implement a three-phased hub and spoke model outlined below. In June 2024, the CAVUHB Investment Group fully supported the Phase 1 business case.

**Phase 1** (*full implementation expected by July 2025*): Embed and expand the outreach and in-reach aspects of the model. This includes GP and nurse outreach into high-need homeless hostels, probation services, sex parlours, and mobile gypsy traveller sites and a

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<sup>1</sup> Health inclusion groups include people experiencing homelessness, sex workers, asylum seekers/refugees, individuals in the Criminal Justice System, and Gypsy, Roma Travellers. However, it is important to note that there is a spectrum of need within these groups, and this project focuses on those most in need.

health inclusion in-reach team based in the Emergency Unit and University Hospital Wales. Phase 1 will continue to work closely with Homelessness MDT.

**Phase 2:** Establish a service hub that will act as the coordination centre for the provision of health, housing, and social care for individuals in identified health inclusion groups. This hub will co-locate an extended multidisciplinary team (MDT) and relevant services.

**Phase 3:** Commission intermediate care beds, potentially as part of Phase 2 or earlier if suitable accommodation and a model are agreed upon.

## **2. CAVHIS and Homelessness MDT Partnership Working**

The two services currently collaborate, with the vision to merge the services in Phase 2. Current partnership arrangements include:

- Information sharing via the Homelessness MDT WASPI. WASPI is being updated to incorporate new partnerships and reflect changes in data sharing legislation.
- CAVHIS and Homelessness MDT refer into one another's services:
  - CAVHIS GPs and nurses refer to the Homelessness MDT for comprehensive support from allied healthcare professionals, including occupational therapists, dietitians, mental health specialists, and substance misuse support.
  - The Homelessness MDT refers to the in-reach service and coordinates with GP and nurse services in high-need hostels.
- CAVHIS provides clinical governance to nurse role within the Homelessness MDT.
- CAVHIS attends Homelessness MDT meetings weekly to contribute to case management plans.

## **3. Key Successes**

### **a. Partnership Working**

Over the past few years, partnership working between Cardiff Council, CAVUHB, and third sector partners has increased significantly, demonstrating a clear joint commitment to tackling the severe and multiple disadvantages that health inclusion groups face.

All partners understand that a single system and service response is neither efficient nor cost-effective. We recognise the need to collaborate in developing approaches that reduce pressures on systems, provide cost savings, improve healthy life expectancy, and, importantly, save lives.

This commitment is evident through the efforts of the Health Inclusion Programme Board, Health Inclusion Implementation Group, and various working groups which bring together partners to implement the vision.

### **b. Data Collection**

One of the project's biggest challenges is collating data on health inclusion groups. Baseline data is limited because these patients often do not engage with existing services, and when they do, they are not coded within Patient Administration Systems at the GP or hospital level. This makes it difficult to accurately describe or predict the demand and trends within these groups.

To evidence need and monitor impact, significant work has been undertaken at a local level to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Key data exercises include:

- Tracking the NHS activity of 462 people experiencing homelessness. This monitoring is conducted via NHS numbers for those who have been seen by GPs in homelessness hostels. As the model progresses, this data set will expand.
- Quarterly reporting on homeless deaths of individuals known to the Council's accommodation and support gateway. A partnership with the South Wales Coroners has been established to understand, where possible, the cause of death. Additionally, work is underway with the medical examiner's office to improve reporting.
- Conducting an in-depth review of 25 people experiencing homelessness to understand the costs to public services within a two-year period.
- Collated data on demand, including a Health Inclusion Needs Assessment for Cardiff and Vale conducted in 2022, and further reviewed the spectrum of need for these cohorts in Cardiff to identify those most in need.

CAVHIS is working with health and housing colleagues to improve the visibility of health inclusion groups within health data. A list of housing statuses has been agreed upon, and work is ongoing to embed these into health assessments and systems. This

### **c. Impact to Date: Reduced Pressure and Costs on Systems**

The tracking of 462 people experiencing homelessness provided evidence demonstrating that this cohort accessed care reactively, presenting to urgent and emergency care services with complex presentations. This was central to the phase 1 business case. This data has also allowed us to monitor the impact of the service to date.

A 9-month comparison of pre and post the in-reach service implementation (January-September 2023 vs. January-September 2024) has shown a:

- 20% reduction in Emergency Unit attendances (826 to 660), saving £36,164.
- 50% reduction in time spent in the EU (9,926 hours to 4,966 hours).
- 15% reduction in admissions (177 to 150).
- 41% reduction in length of stay (1563 to 921), saving £402,463.
- 41% reduction in the number of people attending more than 10 times.

While the data focuses on the Emergency Unit and secondary care, it is important to highlight that the community outreach service and the Homelessness MDT, alongside the in-reach service, will also contribute to the reductions outlined above.

### **d. Impact to Date: Improved Outcomes for Patients and Staff**

The project recognises the power and importance of qualitative data, collecting direct feedback from people using the services and staff. In February 2025, at the official launch of the in-reach service, a patient spoke about the impact of the service:

*"The CAVHIS team have been really great. They come and see me once or twice a week. They've really helped me out and made me feel comfortable."*

*"I've done my treatment because of the staff I've met — I've been clean off heroin for two months. It's not long, but for me, it's good. I've moved to a different hostel now, and I've got a good support team around me."*

Both health, council, and third sector staff have provided positive feedback on the service. A staff member from the Emergency Unit stated that the in-reach service:

*"allows a stretched clinical team with multiple priorities to deliver holistic and compassionate care to vulnerable people who have significant health and social needs but, for a variety of reasons, often struggle to access support services not designed with them in mind."*

Work is also underway to develop a health inclusion engagement network to ensure the voices of people using services are embedded into its design and delivery.

#### 4. Key Next Steps:

**Develop shared outcome measures between Health and Council:** Measures to demonstrate the impact of the model on the whole person's journey. By collaborating on these measures, we aim to capture comprehensive data that reflects improvements in health, housing stability, and social care.

**Enhance data collection:** Following the success of the newly launched 'Single View of the Child,' we are investigating possibilities to develop 'Single View of The Adult,' which would use the information, intelligence, and data we have across the Council and public services to develop a 'Single View' of the contacts each adult has with our services. The single view of the child is underpinned by the principle that **linking data is more important than building a single data system**. Lessons learned from the rollout of universal case management systems confirms **linking disparate systems together** is a more sustainable and efficient way than finding a single monolithic system to solve our data problems (which would take more time and expense).

**Identify a suitable building for Phase 2:** Phase 2 is crucial for CAVHIS to take on full primary care responsibilities for the agreed groups. The new hub will enable the co-location of services, merging CAVHIS and the homelessness MDT, access to allied health professionals, specialist community clinics, and seamless integration with in-reach and outreach elements. This will provide holistic, person-centered care with a 'no wrong door' approach.

**Intermediate care beds:** Reviewing information from the benchmarking exercise, develop and agree on a local model, covering aspects such as the pathway, length of stay, funding, workforce, and location.

**Identify funding:** Source revenue and capital funding to progress the project forward, aiming for co-commissioned joint funding of health inclusion that is fully integrated and sustainable.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1483  
Ein cyf/Our ref MDFWL/00145/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

26 March 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter and for bringing Ms Cullimore's concerns to my attention. As the Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for the legislation relating to the regulation of visitor accommodation and the visitor levy, it felt appropriate that I respond.

As the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning set out in her letter of 19 November 2024, the Welsh Government recognises concerns about the impact that some visitor accommodation can have on communities and reports of inconsistent compliance with, or understanding of, statutory requirements. It is partly for this reason we have already put in place a range of measures which seek to begin to address those concerns, some of which are referenced in Ms Cullimore's letter.

In particular, the primary aims of our changes to local taxes are to ensure property owners are making a fair contribution and to maximise the use of property, to the benefit of local communities. This could include benefits arising from increased occupancy for short-term letting or the release of some properties for sale or rent as permanent homes for local people. As a consequence of the changes, self-catering holiday lets are liable for non-domestic rates (rather than council tax) only if they are being used for business purposes for at least half of the year (182 days).

It is expected that genuine holiday let businesses are able to meet the letting criteria where the local supply of self-catering accommodation does not exceed demand. Properties with high levels of occupancy make a substantial contribution to the local economy and benefit from the same non-domestic rates support as other small businesses. Second homes let out on a more occasional basis are instead liable for council tax, which may include a premium.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The classification and valuation method applied to self-catering holiday lets is the responsibility of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), which is independent of the Welsh Government. The figure quoted by Ms Cullimore for the number listed for non-domestic rates reflects the position as it was prior to full implementation of the current letting criteria. The VOA will soon have completed all compliance checks since the changes took effect on 1 April 2023. I look forward to receiving further evidence from the VOA after April, which will provide updated numbers of holiday lets listed for non-domestic rates. I can also clarify that properties which do not meet the criteria will have their council tax listing backdated to the first day, on or after 1 April 2023, from which the properties did not comply.

I note Ms Cullimore's suggestions for alternative approaches to local taxes for second homes and holiday lets. We are in a period of adjustment, following the policy changes already made by the Welsh Government and the decisions taken locally about premiums, as some property owners consider their options and determine how to respond. It will be important to allow time for these changes to embed before drawing any firm conclusions. We consider our local tax regime will help local authorities to incentivise the right balance between capacity within the self-catering tourism sector, and the economic benefits that brings, and supporting viable communities of local residents to live and work in these areas.

In relation to council tax premiums, if a liable person has more than one home, the local authority must decide which is their main residence based on any evidence available. The starting point for deciding the sole or main residence is section 6(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, where a 'sole or main residence' refers to premises in which the taxpayer actually resides. Usually, a person's main residence would be the dwelling that a reasonable onlooker with knowledge of facts would regard as that person's home at the time. Using the property for example as a postal address or store property does not constitute residence for council tax purposes. The local authority can consider a range of evidence from a taxpayer that the property is their main residence e.g. bank statements, utility bills, registration at a GP surgery, forms of identification and statements from neighbours and professionals. A local authority is expected to act reasonably when assessing such evidence.

The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2015 provide an exception for dwellings being marketed for sale which is time-limited for one year only. If a self-catering property does not meet the letting thresholds, it will be classified as a domestic property and will be liable for council tax and the premium. If the owner subsequently decides to market the property for sale, the exception is designed to allow time to do so and they will not be liable to pay a premium, but will continue to pay council tax at the standard rate. After an exception has ended, a dwelling being marketed for sale will not be eligible for a further exception period unless it has been sold to a new owner.

More broadly, the Welsh Government is committed to reducing opportunities for tax avoidance, which undermines the efforts of the vast majority to pay what is due. We are delivering a package of measures to tackle non-domestic rates avoidance, which will be fully implemented by April 2026. This package includes changes to help prevent a minority of ratepayers from accessing non-domestic rates reliefs they are not intended to be eligible for.

These measures are, however, just part of the picture. On 25 November 2024, I introduced to the Senedd the Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) ('VARL') Bill. As the title shows, it includes provision for the registration of visitor accommodation in Wales, a decision I took in order to expedite the implementation of the register. That Bill, subject to Senedd approval, will require all visitor accommodation providers to register any and all visitor accommodation they provide in Wales and share information about that accommodation.

Once implemented, the register (much of which will be made publicly available), will provide valuable data for local authorities which has been, up to now, either unreliable or simply not available. As Ms Cullimore pointed out, only the local authority in Gwynedd and Eryri National Park Authority have considered implementing the Article 4 direction thus far. However, the register will help to fill the data gap, providing a more rounded picture of the sector and a better evidence base for local authorities to consider the needs of communities and the visitor economy in their area.

The VARL Bill is the first Bill in a package of legislation to regulate visitor accommodation. As well as providing for registration, this first Bill affords local authorities discretionary powers to implement a levy on overnight stays in their area, to raise additional funds that can be invested back into local services and infrastructure. Following this, and as the petition itself highlights, the Welsh Government intends to introduce further legislation before the end of this Senedd term to provide for the licensing of visitor accommodation in Wales.

This second Bill will require visitor accommodation providers to apply for a licence. Work is continuing quickly on the detail of that Bill, with the matters to be included still being finalised. As part of that work, we are considering what scope the legislation should give for a future Senedd to add additional requirements into the licensing scheme without needing further primary legislation. The focus, at least in the first instance, will be on safety; emphasising compliance with relevant statutory safety obligations, and complementing existing legislative requirements.

In considering this legislation and government policies more broadly, we are seeking to balance not only the needs of communities with those of a successful and sustainable visitor economy, but also with the rights of owners to peaceful enjoyment of their property. As such, any additional conditions that may be developed in the future will need to consider that balance carefully, alongside whether existing regulatory or enforcement measures are sufficient to mitigate any harm to visitors, staff, and the communities in which the visitor accommodation is being used, whilst also maintaining value for money for the taxpayer. We will also need to consider which part of the system is best placed to act, balancing a clear and consistent national framework with support for local authorities to meet the distinctive needs of their areas.

It is for these reasons that there are no plans to include provision for neighbours or communities to be involved in the consideration of applications for a licence under this scheme. It may appear this prioritises visitors over residents or communities, but ensuring properties being used for visitor accommodation are safe will be of benefit to all, particularly where the accommodation is in close proximity to other residential properties, such as in Ms Cullimore's case.

Whilst individually, these measures and legislation may not achieve the exact outcome Ms Cullimore and the other petitioners desire; taken together, and once implemented, they will go a significant way to achieving the right balance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

**Mark Drakeford AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a'r Gymraeg  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language



# Provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

## The Welsh Government's response to the Local Government and Housing Follow Up Inquiry (Feb 2024)

3 April 2025

I am grateful to the Local Government and Housing Committee for inviting me to give evidence in October 2024 and welcome this opportunity to respond to their follow up report and recommendations in relation to the Committee's inquiry into provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller persons.

The Committee has put forward a further 10 recommendations, which I have addressed below.

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## 1. Introduction

Welsh Government is committed to creating an anti-racist nation by 2030. The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP)<sup>1</sup>, launched in June 2022 and refreshed in 2024, calls for zero tolerance of all racial inequality. The Action Plan contains a number of actions to recognise that safe, culturally appropriate accommodation is necessary in order for individuals to flourish in other parts of their lives and to address the lack of site provision and poor quality of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in Wales.

In 2021, the Local Government and Housing Committee initiated an inquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities in Wales. The 2022 report published 21 recommendations, all accepted by Welsh Government.

A follow-up inquiry was conducted by the Committee in October 2023 to assess the progress made on the initial recommendations and to identify any further actions needed. I attended in February 2024 and October 2024 to give evidence.

This is my response to the latest follow-up inquiry which made an additional 10 recommendations.

Goals and actions to improve outcomes for our Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people and communities are embedded across policy areas, and all policy areas are responsible for reporting on outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to the ArWAP External Accountability Group.

Fourteen actions in the ArWAP plan (Annex A) relate to housing policy for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities. One action is in the leadership chapter, eleven are in the Homes and Places chapter, and two are in the Crime and Justice chapter.

We significantly strengthened the Race, Faith, Belief and Gypsy Roma and Traveller Team to enable significant engagement with Gypsy and Traveller people and communities and with local authorities and other partners.

Work is underway to address these actions. This includes:

- Our action to deliver advocacy and advice services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities has been achieved through awarding a contract to TGP Cymru (Travelling Ahead) to deliver advocacy and advice services to community members until August 2027. In addition, Travelling Ahead will be providing independent planning advice to community members either on private sites and wishing to secure planning advice or community members wishing to develop their own private Gypsy and Traveller sites; this contributes to the delivery of an action within the ArWAP.
- Gypsies and Travellers Wales have been awarded a contract which will deliver against the action related to the provision of transit sites, through the provision of a national evidence base of the need for transit provision across Wales and recommendations for location and models of transit. Central to this contract is listening to the evidence base of community members who travel nomadically. This evidence base and recommendations will be provided to Welsh Government in October 2025 and will form the basis of discussion with local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan: 2024 update \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

- We held the first meeting of a new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder group in February 2025. This meeting brings Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people together with Welsh Government, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations to ensure all our policy work and decisions support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities throughout Wales. To ensure a diversity of representation, a third sector organisation has been awarded a contract to recruit community members to participate in these meetings.
- We are currently consulting on four Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller guidance documents for local authorities. Opportunities have been taken to update the guidance to reference the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, provide clearer definitions of different Gypsy and Traveller sites, make the language more human rights based and place a greater emphasis on consultation with Gypsy and Traveller residents.
- In parallel with the public consultation, two contracts to facilitate community members to engage on the four guidance documents have been awarded.
- We reviewed the Site Capital Grant guidance in 2024-25 and in 2025-26, considering the application process, the criteria and feedback from local authorities. Land acquisition was added to the Capital Sites Guidance for 2024-25 and as part of the review process for 2025-26, 'exceptional cases' has been removed in reference to land acquisition. Our GTAA (Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment) monitoring arrangements have included raising awareness of the Capital Sites Grant funding and uptake this financial year to date has been excellent.
- Procurement for the development of a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller training package for local authorities and to deliver a national training programme across all Welsh local authorities is underway and this training is expected to commence from 1 April 2026.

I thank the members of the Local Government Housing Committee for their follow up inquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. I have set out my response to the Committee's individual recommendations below.

## 2. Response to the 10 recommendations

### Recommendation 1

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government provides an update on progress made against recommendations in our 2022 report on the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers.

#### **Response: Accept**

An update on progress made against the 21 recommendations made by the Local Government and Housing Committee in 2022 can be found as part of **Annex B**.

**Financial Implications** – none.

### Recommendation 2

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government should provide the Committee with the latest data on the number of transit pitches in Wales and update us on how it intends to increase transitory provision in Wales including how it will ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are met.

#### **Response: Accept**

The latest Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) identified four pitches in Wales - in Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire and Torfaen. Two of these were not identified in the caravan count. These pitches are not considered truly available transit pitches in the sense that they are not openly available and known about by all community members who travel nomadically.

The responsibility for the provision of transit sites lies with local authorities. However, Welsh Ministers are committed to encouraging local authorities to work in partnership to deliver solutions to address the limited transit provision across Wales.

Local authority GTAA's (between 25 February 2016 to 24 February 2022) concluded there was some need for transit provision in Wales. In addition to the four pitches identified above from three local authorities, only four local authorities identified the need to create transit pitches in their area. All remaining local authority GTAA's did not identify a need.

Welsh Government has supported local authorities to come together and attempt to find a regional approach to transit provision. It was clear from those discussions that a national transit evidence base was needed to understand patterns of travel by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in and out of local authorities and in and out of Wales, as well as travel for cultural and/or religious festival locations and employment opportunities.

We have awarded a contract to Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GTW) to develop this national evidence base and make recommendations for the location and models of transit and/or negotiated stopping places across Wales.

This contract includes a stipulation that the organisation must engage with community members who travel nomadically, including Irish Travellers who regularly enter through North Wales and travel across local authority areas.

The successful contractor will work with Gypsy and Traveller community members, local authorities, the police, the WLGA, Corporate Joint Committees, Public Service Boards, health boards and Welsh Government to understand practical needs around transit provision and where the most suitable locations would be.

Recommendations from this contract are due in October 2025.

**Financial Implications** – This work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government should work closely with local authorities and members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities to deliver additional temporary negotiated stopping sites. All negotiated stopping sites in Wales must provide appropriate waste and sanitary services.

**Response:** Accept

As part of the transit contract referenced above, the contractor will include discussions and options around negotiated stopping places in tandem with or as an alternative to transit provision. Once we have recommendations in October 2025, we will work with local authorities to deliver the recommendations.

Welsh Government provides capital site funding available to local authorities to fund either local authority sites or transit sites. In 2024-25, we extended the eligibility criteria to include the acquisition of land which can be used for new pitches, new sites, transit sites or temporary/negotiated stopping places. Sites Capital Grant guidance has also been reviewed in advance of 2025-26. For 2025-26, the capital funding will prioritise new pitches to meet the outstanding pitch need. We have also indicated that bids requesting support for new pitches or for transit pitches will be favoured.

**Financial Implications** – This work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government sets out how it is monitoring use of the Sites Capital Grant to ensure that funds are being used appropriately and address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales.

**Response:** Accept

All capital grant bids are assessed by a grant assessment panel of Welsh Government officials who consider the value for money of each application and assess each bid against the capital guidance criteria. Once a grant has been awarded, monthly monitoring meetings are set up between the Gypsy Roma Traveller grant manager and the local authority to ensure all works are undertaken and completed as agreed and funds are being used appropriately.

**Financial Implications** – None.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government reviews the criteria and application process for the Sites Capital Grant to ensure that it is effectively utilised by local authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

**Response: Accept**

As stated above, the Sites Capital Grant guidance was reviewed in 2024-25 and in 2025-26, the review looked at the application process, the criteria and responded to feedback from local authorities. For 2025-26 the bidding process is open all year round.

The Site Capital guidance for next year places a greater emphasis on the creation of new pitches to address local authorities GTAA unmet pitch need.

**Financial Implications** – This work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government should set out how it will work with local authorities to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller site maintenance is undertaken, and how it will tackle local authorities' failure to maintain and improve those sites. As part of this, it should consider how local authorities fund and prioritise Gypsy and Traveller site maintenance.

**Response: Accept**

We have put in place a programme of monitoring with local authorities of progress against their GTAAs. This monitoring includes plans around existing sites and any intelligence we are aware of through our Advocacy and Advice contractor about the poor condition of sites.

As part of this monitoring, discussions also focus on local authorities' plans for site management and maintenance. This includes how having a well-managed and proactive maintenance plan positively impacts the residents.

We have reviewed and updated the Designing Gypsy and Traveller sites guidance and Managing Gypsy and Traveller sites guidance which are currently being consulted on. In addition, we have contracted Gypsies and Travellers Wales and travelling Ahead to undertake direct and facilitated engagement with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community on these guidance documents.

The revised Managing Gypsy and Traveller sites guidance has strengthened the emphasis on having a structured maintenance plan in place. It highlights the importance of comprehensive planning, clearly defines responsibilities, and emphasises high-quality standards. Additionally, it encourages community involvement to ensure the needs and preferences of the residents are considered.

Local authorities are encouraged to bid for funding, of the available £3.44 million Site Capital Grant funding for 2024-25. This is available to fund either local authority residential sites or transit sites. These can fund projects to refurbish existing accommodation, construct new pitches and improve the sustainability of sites for residents. In 2024-25 I awarded £2,000,235 funding for site improvements.

**Financial Implications** – This work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

### Recommendation 7

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government should explore how the Sites Capital Grant could be used to support the development of private sites.

**Response: Accept**

Officials are considering how best to support private sites.

**Financial Implications** – This work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

### Recommendation 8

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government should progress the pilot programme to provide advice to Gypsies and Travellers seeking help to develop private sites as a matter of urgency and update the Committee in three months.

**Response: Accept**

Stakeholders have indicated that there remains an ongoing problem with Gypsy and Traveller people being sold unsuitable land and struggling to gain planning permission to turn land into private Gypsy and Traveller sites.

As part of the Advocacy and Advice contract, additional funding was awarded to Travelling Ahead to provide private planning advice to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Planning advice will be available from 1st April 2025. This pilot will begin from April 2025 and run for a period of 18-months.

Travelling Ahead will be sub-contracting in planning experts to provide this advice as well as undertaking targeted work to make those seeking private sites aware that this specific planning advice service is available.

They will also be undertaking some mapping about the numbers of community members in need of planning advice or wanting to set up their own private sites.

Welsh Government response to the Local Government Housing Committee follow up inquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

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The pilot for planning advice is a distinct piece of work that will be delivered as an addition to the Travelling Ahead Advocacy and Advice contract.

This service will provide targeted planning advice to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities looking to develop private sites.

**Financial Implications** – This work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

### **Recommendation 9**

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government should reinstate the Gypsy and Traveller Forum with urgency.

#### **Response: Accept**

A Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Stakeholder Group has been reinstated, involving Welsh Government, local authorities, third sector organisations and community members. The purpose of this meeting is bringing together Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people with Welsh Government, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations to ensure all our policy work and decisions support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities throughout Wales.

We have awarded a contract to a Gypsy and Traveller third sector organisation to recruit community members to attend and participate in the meetings scheduled across Wales.

The first meeting took place on 27 February 2025.

**Financial Implications** – This work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

### **Recommendation 10**

The Committee Recommends that:

The Welsh Government should ensure that each local authority has a Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer.

#### **Response: Accept in principle**

We are not responsible for local authority staffing decisions; we can, however, encourage local authorities to appoint designated Gypsy and Traveller Liaison officers. We are aware that 15 local authorities already have designated Gypsy and Traveller posts.

In addition, the Committee might wish to be aware there is an action within the revised Anti Racist Wales Action Plan to set up community mentor liaison roles for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, to address the under-representation of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller voices.

Officials are considering policy options to recruit members from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community to step into this community mentor/liaison role. Officials will also be considering mechanisms by which community mentors can be used within local authorities.

**Financial Implications** – Whilst Welsh Government are not responsible for local authority staffing decisions, the work to set up community mentor liaison roles for Gypsy, Roma

and Traveller people which will support local authorities to understand the need of this community will be accommodated within existing budgets.

Annex A

### Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ArWAP actions

<u>Leadership in anti-racism chapter</u>
<b>Action:</b> Set up community mentor or liaison roles for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. This work will include leadership training as identified by the mentors, ensuring it is community-led.
<u>Homes and Places chapter</u>
<b>Action:</b> Work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members, local authorities and others to provide appropriate transit provision. Decisions will be taken based on evidence of where transit is needed.
<b>Action:</b> Pilot additional or new ways of funding permanent provision.
<b>Action:</b> Fund a study to look at options for a mobile home rental scheme through social housing.
<b>Action:</b> Depending on outcome of the mobile home rental scheme study, set up pilot scheme.
<b>Action:</b> We will procure a framework for an external training company to develop and deliver a training course to upskill all 22 Local Authorities on Gypsy, Roma and Travellers nomadic ways of living. This will be developed with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members.
<b>Action:</b> Commission a three-year pilot programme to provide advice to those seeking to develop private sites.
<b>Action:</b> Review the Gypsy and Traveller capital sites guidance. This will include reviewing the piloting of funding for buying land, feedback from the communities and a decision on funding for private sites.
<b>Action:</b> Re-draft and simplify the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Guidance, involving community members to reflect their needs.
<b>Action:</b> Welsh Government will use its powers to ensure local authorities comply with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
<b>Action:</b> Have regular meetings with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and stakeholders to inform Welsh Government policy. Ensure people feel included in the meetings.
<b>Action:</b> Provide advice and advocacy services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
<u>Crime and Justice chapter</u>

Welsh Government response to the Local Government Housing Committee follow up inquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

**Action:** Update the Managing Unauthorised Camping guidance, involving community members to reflect their needs.

**Action:** Work with police and community members to adopt unauthorised encampments protocol.

### 3. Annex B

#### Welsh Government Updates to Local Government Housing Recommendations from August 2022:

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Welsh Government Update</u>
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to support local authorities in the provision of sites that are appropriate for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, including how it will work with local authorities and communities to mitigate the challenges of finding suitable land for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller site accommodation.</p>	<p>Welsh Government does this through the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) process and through ongoing discussions with local authorities about their progress in meeting the needs identified in their GTAAs. These meetings are at Ministerial and official level.</p> <p>Welsh Government provides capital site funding available to local authorities to fund either residential sites or transit sites. These can fund projects to refurbish existing accommodation, construct new pitches and improve the sustainability of sites for residents. This year we have extended the eligibility criteria to include the acquisition of land to try and unblock local authority barriers to the provision of sites.</p> <p>Site capital grant funding for 2025-26 is £3.44 million and all local authorities have been encouraged to bid for funding.</p> <p>We have also put in place a programme of monitoring with local authorities of progress against their cycle 2 GTAA.</p> <p>Welsh Government has awarded funding to Travelling Ahead to provide private planning advice to communities from April 2025 over an 18-month period in addition to the existing Advocacy and Advice contract (awarded in September 2024). This will aid in mitigating the challenges for finding suitable land for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to support Corporate Joint Committees and individual local authorities to develop a network of transitory provision, and how it will</p>	<p>All outstanding GTAAs for the latest GTAA cycle (2016 - 2022) were approved in 2024 by Welsh Ministers.</p> <p>Welsh Government has awarded a contract to Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GTW), to provide research in the form of a national evidence base on the needs of transit across Wales. The research will make recommendations around the location and models of transit. These recommendations are due to Welsh Government by</p>

<p>monitor and ensure progress.</p>	<p>October 2025, which will then inform discussions with local authorities.</p> <p>Central to this contract is the expectation of the involvement of community members in this evidence-based approach.</p> <p>Developing a robust evidence base, in collaboration with relevant regional parties and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people will help to ensure that transit provision is located appropriately and can be accessed by those who need it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should provide an update on arrangements for an independent and trusted advice service for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, including funding, resource and skills requirement.</p>	<p>Welsh Government has awarded Travelling Ahead (TGP Cymru) to deliver an Advocacy and Advice contract through a competitive procurement exercise to deliver advice and advocacy support to Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities. This contract will be delivered from September 2024 to August 2027.</p> <p>The objectives of the service are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate equality of opportunity for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers within Welsh society.</li> <li>• Provide support and connect with expert advice services to help community members integrate effectively into Welsh society, including advocating changes to public processes where necessary.</li> <li>• Support community cohesion through challenging negative stereotypes and fostering good relations between groups.</li> <li>• Empower communities and individuals to have a voice and make representations on their own behalf on policy development and any other issues raised.</li> <li>• Support the Welsh Government to eliminate racism and discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and to offer solutions to the barriers Gypsy Roma and Traveller people face.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively with Welsh Government to address systemic issues impacting Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities and designing solutions to resolve issues reflecting the lived experience of Gypsy Roma and Traveller people.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully engage with evaluation of the contract, both evaluation of the contract's performance as well as evaluation with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller service users.</li> </ul> <p>The service will be available to adults and children and young people in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Wales.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should work with local authorities to ensure that they have the necessary resources to fulfil their duties under the Housing Act.</p>	<p>My officials work in partnership with local authority Gypsy, Roma and Traveller leads to support their day-to-day interactions with community members, through monitoring of their GTAA compliance, through the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder group and through the case work officials become involved with as highlighted by our Advocacy and Advice contract providers. My officials continue to work closely with local authorities to help them to meet duties to address housing need.</p> <p>The policy team has a dedicated Gypsy, Roma and Traveller grant manager to support applications from local authorities. Monitoring meetings are set up between the Gypsy, Roma Traveller grant manager and the local authority to ensure all works are undertaken and completed as agreed and funds are being used appropriately.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government must ensure that the Housing Act is effective in providing suitable sites for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. It should therefore set out how it intends to tighten its monitoring of the implementation of the Act.</p>	<p>As part of the GTAA process, officials are carrying out regular monitoring with local authorities to hold them to account for their duty in meeting the need they identified in their GTAA. These monitoring arrangements have also included raising awareness of the Capital Sites Grant funding and uptake this financial year to date has been excellent.</p> <p>Where my officials believe local authorities are either not meeting their duties to meet housing need or progress against their GTAAs is not adequate, my officials will in the first instance escalate this within the local authority. If a resolution cannot be found, my officials will brief me, and I may wish to escalate this with Council leaders.</p> <p>Section 104 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 gives Welsh Ministers the power to direct the authority to exercise its powers under section 56 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. This is a power I will consider using if it appears that local authorities are not making all reasonable efforts to meet their duties.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should provide further information about how and when it will use its powers to ensure that local authorities deliver on their duties under the Housing Act.</p>	<p>Where my officials believe local authorities are either not meeting their duties to meet housing need or progress against their GTAAs is not adequate, my officials will in the first instance escalate this within the local authority.</p> <p>The escalation process is assessed considering timelines for planning activities by local authorities, ensuring Welsh Government officials are kept informed of any potential risks or delays. If progress is unsatisfactory, officials will request an immediate update from local authorities, emphasising their statutory duty. This ensures accountability and timely resolution of issues.</p> <p>If a resolution cannot be found, officials will brief Ministers, who may wish to escalate this with Council leaders.</p> <p>Section 104 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 gives Welsh Ministers the power to direct the authority to exercise its powers under section 56 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. This is a power Ministers will consider using if it appears that local authorities are not making all reasonable efforts to meet their duties.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> The Welsh Government should set out its plans, including timescales, for evaluating the effectiveness of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan in helping to provide sites for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.</p>	<p>The ArWAP was refreshed in 2024 and includes new actions and timelines with goals and actions to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people.</p> <p>These actions and goals are embedded across numerous policy areas who are responsible for reporting on outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to the ArWAP External Accountability Group (EAG).</p> <p>Following a governance review, we identified opportunities to strengthen our structure and are currently seeking to appoint three new experts to the EAG. These opportunities have been widely promoted, including to Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller stakeholder organisations, which are invited to submit expressions of interest to join the group and if successful, their participation will aid in evaluating the effectiveness of the ArWAP.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b> The Welsh Government should provide an update on the timescales for the actions in the Anti-racist Wales Action</p>	<p>Officials met with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholders and community members to discuss the ArWAP refresh in May 2024. Feedback from community members were that the actions were too complicated, and the language needed to be simplified.</p>

<p>Plan which are already underway.</p>	<p>The actions were since revised and approved by in December 2024. Following the refresh, one new action was included related to community mentor/liaison roles, the remaining actions were simplified and timescales reviewed. Of the 14 actions relating to housing provision, 5 have been completed, 2 are nearing completion and 7 have a workplan in place to deliver by the revised ArWAP timelines.</p> <p>Key updates include:</p> <p><u>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Stakeholder Group:</u></p> <p>One of the most immediate actions is to set up a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller group which held its first hybrid meeting with local authorities and community members in Aberystwyth on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025. There and Back Again invited members from these communities to join this stakeholder group. These meetings will happen every four months across Wales, which will help us to develop our activities in partnership with the community.</p> <p><u>Transit:</u></p> <p>The transit research contract has been awarded to Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GTW) to provide research and recommendations around where transit provision would be most suitable across Wales and what this could practically look like. Involving community members in this evidence-based approach will complement the transit provision research by facilitating an understanding of the travelling life for families across Wales and prevent social exclusion of this community.</p> <p>Recommendations are due to Welsh Government by October 2025 and will be shared with relevant local authorities following this.</p> <p><u>National Training Programme:</u></p> <p>Work is underway to procure a national training programme for all 22 local authorities in Wales to be upskilled on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller needs. This will be designed and developed with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities at the heart of this training.</p> <p>This procurement is now live for bids and will be awarded in Spring/ early Summer 2025.</p>
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	<p><u>Private advice pilot:</u></p> <p>We will be introducing a pilot programme that will be delivered through a third sector organisation to provide planning advice to families to help them avoid spending money on unsuitable land. Welsh Government have awarded ring-fenced funding as part of the Advocacy and Advice contract to Travelling Ahead to provide private planning advice to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This advice will be available to communities via Travelling Ahead from 1 April 2025.</p> <p><u>Guidance Documents:</u></p> <p>Officials have re drafted four guidance documents pertaining to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and all are now published for public consultation.</p> <p>In addition to reviewing the guidance, we have awarded third sector organisations to engage with the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community on what this guidance means to them, which will be published in the summer months.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b></p> <p>In reviewing the sites guidance, the Welsh Government should explain how it intends to engage with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to ensure that design and location needs of communities are better reflected in the guidance.</p>	<p>In parallel with an ongoing public consultation of four Gypsy and Traveller guidance documents for local authorities, my officials have awarded contracts with two Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations to undertake facilitated engagement work on these draft guidance documents to inform their development.</p> <p>These documents include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales</li> <li>2) Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales</li> <li>3) Undertaking Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessments</li> <li>4) Managing Unauthorised Encampments</li> </ol> <p>Final versions of the guidance will be published in Summer 2025.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should conduct a review of all guidance relating to the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers.</p>	<p>All Gypsy and Traveller guidance documents have been reviewed, updated and are currently live for public consultation.</p> <p>Capital Site Guidance has also been reviewed for 2025-26.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should provide further details on the learning and development support that will be provided to local authority elected members on Gypsy and Traveller communities' culture, needs and strengths. This should include details on: who will receive the training; timescales; how it will be resourced and delivered; and whether it will be a statutory requirement to undertake the training.</p>	<p>A procurement is currently live for an organisation to develop a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller training package and deliver a programme of training to local authorities over a three-year period. This training will commence from 1 April 2026 over a period of 3 years.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to evaluate the impact of the training for local authority elected members on Gypsy and Traveller communities' culture, needs and strengths.</p>	<p>Evaluation of the training package and training delivery is written into the contract.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should include community councillors in the commitment in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan to provide training for local authority elected members</p>	<p>Training will be made available to Councillors as part of the training contract mentioned above.</p>

<p>on Gypsy and Traveller communities' culture, needs and strengths.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 14:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should set out what steps, other than those in the Anti-racist Action Plan, it will take to improve knowledge and understanding of the culture, needs and strengths of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities among the wider community.</p>	<p>There is an action within the Anti Racist Wales Action Plan to set up community mentor or liaison roles for Gypsy, Traveller people.</p> <p>Officials are considering policy options to recruit members from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community to step into this community mentor/liaison role. Officials will also be considering mechanisms by which community mentors can be used within local authorities.</p> <p>Addressing the under-representation of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller voices, mentoring, coaching, and community leadership programmes will increase understanding of racial inequality and strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the culture and needs of the community.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should review whether the existing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments process is the most appropriate and effective way of assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.</p>	<p>The GTAA process was reviewed in 2024.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 16:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should work with local authorities to review how engagement and consultation with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities during the accommodation assessment process can be improved, including the extent to which the</p>	<p>An effective GTAA is only as effective as its engagement with the community, we expect to see this engagement and positive relationships between the local authority and its community to inform any assessment of need and any plans to meet that need – this is the good practice that we would expect from all local authorities. As part of our review of the GTAA guidance, engagement with the community will be a fundamental expectation.</p>

<p>measures and actions within the Anti-racist Action Plan have made a difference.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 17:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should clarify what process is in place to monitor the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments on an all-Wales basis in order to gain an understanding of accommodation needs at a national as well as a local level.</p>	<p>There is a scrutiny process both at official level and at Ministerial level as part of the GTAA cycle process. Once a GTAA is submitted and scrutinised, Ministers can accept reject or accept with modifications, each local authorities GTAA but are expected to continue to deliver against their existing GTAA until the new assessment had been approved.</p> <p>Officials can use the content of the GTAAs, their existing knowledge about the quality of Gypsy and Traveller sites and any casework identified through the Advocacy and Advice contract to discuss specific sites or issues with local authorities.</p> <p>As outlined above, as part of the GTAA process, officials are carrying out regular monitoring with local authorities to hold them to account for their duty in meeting the need they identified in their GTAA. These monitoring arrangements have also included raising awareness of the Capital Sites Grant funding and uptake this financial year to date has been excellent.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 18:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should conduct a broader review of how the funding for the development of sites relates to the requirements in terms of the standards of sites.</p>	<p>We have reviewed our Site Capital guidance for the last two years, as a result of we have increased the maximum cost per new pitch to £200k from £150k. We have also considered feedback from local authorities and removed the bidding round deadlines, therefore for 2025-26 the bidding process is open all year round.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 19:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should explore all possible options for funding Gypsy, Roma and Traveller accommodation, including whether the criteria for the Capital Sites Grant should be broadened to allow local authorities to purchase land for the development</p>	<p>As part of the Capital Sites funding for 2024-25, we have added the option to use the capital grant for site acquisition to further support local authorities to meet their duty to provide accommodation for these communities.</p> <p>Officials are currently exploring how we can fund private sites for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.</p>

<p>of new sites and how funding could be used to support the development of private sites.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 20:</b> The Welsh Government should provide an update on the work undertaken to provide transit pitches across Wales before the Senedd's summer recess in 2023.</p>	<p>Please see response to Recommendation 2.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 21:</b> The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to work with the police and partner organisations to communicate to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities any anticipated changes to plans for enforcing the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 in Wales.</p>	<p>Officials are members of the Criminal Justice Anti-racist Wales subgroup and are working with partners to update and engage community members on The Police Forces Protocols on Managing Unauthorised Encampments.</p> <p>Once this work is undertaken officials will work with the four police forces to have these protocols signed off, raise awareness of them with community members and have the partners responsible for working with unauthorised encampments fully aware of and following the protocols.</p> <p>Once finalised, we will procure direct engagement on these police protocols with the community.</p>



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: LGHC Budget Scrutiny

John Griffiths MS  
Chair of Local Government and Housing Committee

28 April 2025

Dear John,

In my response to the Local Government & Housing Committee's scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget 2025-25, I agreed to write to you outlining further information on commitments relating to Housing in Wales. Please see the information below.

*Conclusion 3: Use of Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) funding – We believe there is scope for the Welsh Government to make greater use of Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) funding for meeting housing need. We would also like to see a full breakdown of how FTC has been used to fund housing projects in the last five years.*

There are a number of schemes that currently utilise FTC that directly help the sector to meet housing need. These are outlined below.

- The RSL Development Loans provides funding that supports our RSL partners to deliver social homes for rent. It helps to unlock and accelerate existing sites, and funding vital improvement works. Since inception, the scheme has provided support for the delivery of 466 affordable homes.
- The Land for Housing scheme increases the funding options available to RSLs to secure land sites for housing development. It has been in operation for 10 years and has facilitated the delivery of up to 8,000 new homes, of which 81% will be affordable.
- Wales Property Development Fund (WPDF) has been supporting SME house builders to build housing since 2013. The WPDF provides access to affordable development financing and has supported 935 new homes of which 88 are affordable homes, through 75 different businesses, on 93 new developments.
- Wales Stalled Sites Fund builds on the success of the WPDF. It provides affordable finance to SMEs to address the issues experienced in making stalled sites viable for development. These often required an earlier intervention. Since inception in 2015, the scheme has supported 755 new homes of which 95 are affordable homes, through 45 different businesses, on 56 new developments.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We also utilise FTC funds to support individuals who want to own their own homes as well as helping them to stay in their homes in times of financial uncertainties.

- Since 2014, Welsh Government has supported over 14,000 households to purchase a home through Help to Buy – Wales. Our investment in Help to Buy – Wales also provides support to the house building industry and its supply chains, as well as all those involved in the buying and selling of homes.
- The Self-Build Wales scheme was designed to create an opportunity for people to build their own home. It addresses key barriers of finding a plot, planning and finance. The scheme is also available to those who have identified land and wish to build their own home but require a loan for the land purchase and/or build.
- Help to Stay Wales scheme offers homeowners who are in, or facing, financial difficulty support in paying their mortgage commitments. This offers a funding support package comprised of a shared equity loan. The scheme also encourages households to seek free debt advice which may have provided an alternative solution to meet their needs.

Conclusion 6: Expenditure on building new affordable housing - *We would like more information from the Welsh Government as to how it ensures the best value for its expenditure on building new affordable housing and ask for a written response from the Cabinet Secretary to outline this.*

The Welsh Government ensures best value for its expenditure on building new affordable housing by balancing cost, quality, sustainability, wider impact and overall value for money.

This involves strategic planning to build the right types of homes in the right places, ensuring high-quality and sustainable housing that meets Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR 2021) and Welsh Housing Quality Standards 2023. Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) are promoted to enhance efficiency, and all new homes must meet high energy efficiency standards (EPC A). Durability is ensured through the use of quality materials and construction techniques, while cost management is achieved through effective procurement and local sourcing.

Moreover, the Standard Viability Model (SVM), developed by Welsh Government officials with the housing sector was introduced for newbuild schemes in 2021, replacing the standard fixed grant intervention rate of 58%. It ensures grant value for money and that Welsh Government are compliant with subsidy control and Managing Welsh Public Money principles. The SVM is a Net Present Value (NPV) model that calculates the minimum subsidy required on individual housing capital schemes. It ensures that public funds are used efficiently by only providing what is necessary to fulfil any financial shortfall. It demonstrates the funding gap, in other words the level of grant required to break even.

Conclusion 7: Criteria to determine the quality accommodation - *We are interested to know whether homes currently used as temporary accommodation would be suitable for permanent use. We would be grateful for a written response from the Cabinet Secretary setting out criteria used to determine the quality of temporary accommodation compared to permanent accommodation. We would also like to know the split between numbers of permanent and temporary homes funded by TACP.*

Grant funded accommodation delivered through both the Transitional Accommodation Capital programme (TACP) and Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme can be used as permanent or temporary accommodation. All accommodation is required to meet Welsh housing standards if not immediately, over time.

Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR 2021). This is our Newbuild standard and also applies to conversions of non-domestic buildings or buildings currently used for accommodation, where it is practicable and cost effective to do so.

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), this can apply at the point of purchase for existing dwellings (EDs) or Off the Shelf (OTS) properties from a developer, or conversions when complete, where WDQR 2021 is unable to be achieved.

EDs and OTS properties which do not meet WHQS at purchase have ten years to meet this standard. Any properties that are incapable of meeting WHQS within 10 years can be purchased and used for a minimum a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 10 years, after which they must be sold on the open market. Properties purchased under this category, must meet our minimum standards which include minimum sizes for bedrooms, nominal occupancy standards and all must comply with the requirement under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 Act for homes to be fit for human habitation.

The majority of homes funded by TACP have been let on a permanent basis. Homes that are temporary include shared accommodation, supported self-contained accommodation and all meanwhile accommodation.

I trust this information answers the queries the Committee had. Should the Committee require any further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

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# Agenda Item 7

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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