

Agenda – Local Government and Housing Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2, Senedd

Meeting date: 4 June 2025

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Manon George

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

Hybrid

Private pre-meeting

09.15 – 09.30

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

09.30

2 Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill – Evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

09.30 – 11.00

(Pages 1 – 28)

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

Sarah Rhodes, Deputy Director Housing Policy, Welsh Government

Hannah Fisher, Head of Homelessness Prevention Legislation, Welsh Government

Lynda Reid, Lawyer, Welsh Government

[Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation \(Wales\) Bill](#)

[Explanatory Memorandum](#)



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

[Statement of Policy Intent](#)

Attached Documents:

Research brief

3 Papers to note

11.00

3.1 Private rented sector

(Pages 29 – 34)

Attached Documents:

Paper 1 – Private Rented Sector – additional information from Welsh Government in relation to the Committee’s report.

3.2 The provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

(Pages 35 – 36)

Attached Documents:

Paper 2: The provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers – Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

3.3 The role of local authorities in supporting hospital discharges

(Pages 37 – 41)

Attached Documents:

Paper 3: The role of local authorities in supporting hospital discharges – additional information from Welsh Government following the meeting on 7 May

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting

11.00

**5 Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill –
consideration of evidence**

11.00 – 11.30

Document is Restricted

Eich cyf/Your ref PO/JB/210/2025

Ein cyf/Our ref PO/JB/210/2025

John Griffiths MS

Chair of the Local Government & Housing Committee

Senedd Cymru

6 May 2025

Dear John,

I confirmed back in December when I responded to the Committee's recommendations following your inquiry into the Private Rented Sector that I would write to the Committee with regards Recommendation 6.

My officials held a workshop with stakeholders in March to explore the feasibility of enabling tenants who are subject to no-fault evictions to retain the last two months' rent of their tenancy as compensation for the financial and wellbeing impact of a forced move.

I attach a copy of the findings.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jayne.Bryant@llyw.cymru
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.

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Welsh Government

Further response by the Welsh Government to Recommendation 6 of the Local Government and Housing Committee's report into the Private Rented Sector

02/05/2024

In response to Recommendation 6 of the Committee's report into the PRS, the Welsh Government agreed to "explore the feasibility of enabling tenants who are subject to no-fault evictions to retain the last two months' rent of their tenancy as compensation for the financial and wellbeing impact of a forced move". This therefore provides an update on these considerations.

To inform our considerations, a stakeholder workshop was undertaken on 18th March 2025, which included representation from the following organisations:

- Generation Rent
- National Residential Landlords Association
- Propertymark
- Shelter Cymru
- Tai Pawb
- TPAS Cymru

Discussions were also held at an official level with colleagues who liaise with the Department of Work and Pensions, to understand potential impacts in respect of Universal Credit/Housing Benefits.

During the stakeholder engagement, there was recognition of the additional costs tenants face in securing and moving to a new rental property. The engagement also highlighted various risks and potential unintended consequences of such a measure. A summary of these is outlined below.

Potential to undermine the policy objective of a 6 month notice period and lead to an increased risk of homelessness

Under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 the notice period for a no-fault eviction (now known as S173 notice) was extended from 2 months to 6 months. The notice is only able to be served after an initial 6 months, which gives a tenant certainty of at least 12 month occupation of a property.

The purpose of providing a 6 month notice period was to provide as much time as possible for a tenant to be able to look for and secure alternative accommodation.

Under the measure outlined in the Committee's recommendation, a tenant would only benefit from not paying rent 4 months into the notice period. There is therefore a potential risk of tenants choosing to delay securing alternative accommodation in order to benefit from not paying the last 2 months of rent. This would significantly undermine the policy intention of the 6 month notice period. It could result in tenants not having secured alternative accommodation at the end of the notice period and presenting to homelessness services as a result.

Increased rent costs for all tenants

Landlords hold properties in different ways and for different purposes (e.g. business, pension or asset to pass onto children), but regardless of the purpose, all landlords have costs they have to meet in order to pay for or maintain their rental properties.

There is therefore a risk that any landlord required to forego two months of rental income would likely look to cover all (or a significant part) of 12 months of rent over 10 months to ensure that their costs are met – therefore increasing monthly rental costs. As such, the measure proposed in the Committee's recommendation risks the unintended consequence of a general increase in rents across the private rented sector in Wales. This would impact on all tenants and could see those on low incomes or in receipt of housing benefit pushed into rent arrears.

Mortgage/Lending rules and potential impacts on the supply of PRS properties

The Bank of England's Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA) introduced certain regulations affecting the way the buy to let mortgage market is governed. This includes a rental coverage ratio of 140% for standard buy to let properties and an income stress test to demonstrate that landlords can afford to make payments should interest rates rise to 5.5%.

As highlighted above, in order to meet these lending rules landlords with a buy to let mortgage may be forced to increase rents to ensure all costs are met.

There is also a risk that any factors which could impact on a landlord's ability to cover their cost liabilities would be considered a risk by lenders and factored into the interest rates and terms and conditions of any loans. This would adversely impact on landlords seeking to acquire properties, potentially from other landlords or as new supply. This in turn could result in a reduced supply of PRS properties in areas of high demand.

Implications for low-income tenants in receipt of benefits

Under Department for Work and Pension (DWP) rules, in order to receive Housing Benefit, or a housing element of Universal Credit, a person must have a legal liability to pay rent. Therefore, any legal requirement for the last 2 months of rent to be waived in particular circumstances would likely be viewed as there being no legal liability to pay rent.

Benefit recipients are required to notify DWP of any change in their circumstances, and therefore if a tenant notified DWP at the end of month 4 they were no longer required to pay rent for the next 2 months, that element of funding would be stopped. This could result in issues for the tenant in passing any credit checks for a new property, as their income and ability to meet rental payments would be impacted.

If a landlord was receiving direct payment, but had waived the legal liability to pay rent, then they could also face potential claims for repayment from DWP.

Whilst a tenant's entitlement could be re-instated after the 2 month period, it would not commence immediately. This is because any notification of changes will take effect in the following month. Therefore, even if a tenant was able to secure an alternative property and pay a deposit, they could fall immediately into rent arrears as they may not be able to meet the first month's rent.

In circumstances where claimants are still on housing benefit and have not yet transferred across to Universal Credit, the impact could be more acute. In such circumstances where the legal liability to pay rent has been waived and housing benefits are stopped, a claimant would, upon seeking to resume claiming support, be moved over to Universal Credit without any of the protections that would have been afforded to them under a managed process. Therefore, they could see the amount of financial support reduce. This could place pressure on an individual to make up any shortfall or place them into rent arrears.

Such an approach is therefore likely to have the unintended consequence of benefitting tenants with higher disposable incomes and/or savings and adversely impacting low-income tenants.

Existing support for those struggling to pay additional rent or a deposit

Local authorities currently utilise discretionary homelessness prevention funding to support tenants in preventing or relieving homelessness. This can include covering a deposit or assisting with the first month's rent. This helps to overcome that initial challenge of facing double costs during a Section 173 notice period that would prevent a tenant from being able to secure alternative accommodation.

Conclusion

Given the various risks identified and the potential adverse impacts these would ultimately have on tenants, the Welsh Government does not consider it feasible to take forward the measure outlined in the Committee's recommendation.

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/248/25

John Griffiths MS
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN
SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

21 May 2025

Dear John,

Thank you for the opportunity to present an update to the Local Government Housing Committee during the debate on the follow up enquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers on 7th May.

I am providing an update on two of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan goals, that my officials are currently delivering.

1. Transit Provision: To engage with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members to identify the need for appropriate transit provision in Wales.

In January 2024, my officials met with all local authorities to discuss taking a regional approach to the provision of transit sites and collection of associated data. The overwhelming feedback from the discussions highlighted the necessity of understanding transit needs on a national, All-Wales basis.

In response to the feedback Welsh Government awarded a contract to Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GTW) to build national evidence based on the need for transit sites. GTW will work in collaboration with Gypsy and Traveller communities, local authorities, WLGA, Corporate Joint Committees, Public Service Boards, Police and Health Boards and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations to provide evidence of the movement of this community across Wales, including their movements in and out of local authority areas and Wales itself. This information will help us to understand the transit needs across Wales, make recommendations for the location of transit provision, and propose a suitable model for implementing transit sites, including appropriate onsite welfare

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@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.

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provisions. GTW will provide the national evidence base and recommendations by the end of this year and a full report will be shared with local authorities.

To encourage stakeholder participation Welsh Government are writing a letter for distribution to all local authorities urging them to participate in the transit research project over the next 6 months. Local authorities and stakeholder involvement is crucial to the success of this initiative, and we expect full cooperation to achieve our objectives. Involving community members in this evidence-based approach will be key to understanding the needs of travelling life for families across Wales and preventing social exclusion.

2. National Training: To upskill all 22 local authorities in Wales on Gypsy, Roma and Travellers nomadic ways of living.

It is the responsibility of local authorities to apply a culturally sensitive understanding and respect towards the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, which is essential for effective communication and relationship building.

To support this, Welsh Government are in the process of procuring an external training company to design a national training programme to upskill local authorities and deliver it over a 3-year period. Central to this is that it will incorporate the lived experiences of the Gypsy and Traveller community and be developed with community members.

Bids have been assessed, and my officials are approaching the final stages of the procurement process.

I hope this information is helpful in assisting the Committee's recommendation.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Hutt MS

**Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Minister for Social Justice, Trefenydd and Chief Whip**

John Griffiths MS

Chair

Local Government and Housing Committee

SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

29 May 2025

Dear John,

Following on from the Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry held on 7 May, it was agreed that I would update the Committee on the actions being undertaken by the Welsh Government in the areas outlined below, and provide a written response to the questions we were unable to answer due to time constraints.

[Share the April figures data regarding the number of delayed hospital discharges once it has been published](#)

[The April 2025 data](#), published on 22 May, marks the beginning of the third year under the current reporting framework. The total number of discharge delays were 1,404, this is a combination of all health, social care, and joint delays.

It's encouraging to note that the April figure reflects a significant improvement with delay numbers reducing by 18% compared to April 2024.

I am also pleased to report that those delay areas which had consistently seen the highest delay numbers over the past year, achieved some sizable reductions in April. These being chiefly assessment related delays and include waits for the completion of social care assessments, joint health and social care assessments as well as waits associated with starting new home care packages on discharge.

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

Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@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.

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Commit to publishing and sharing the data on the length of hospital discharge delays

As I stated during the Committee meeting, I am committed to ensuring that data on the length of hospital discharge delays is made publicly available. My officials are currently working with our Knowledge and Analytical Services team to facilitate the publishing the data on [StatsWales](#) as quickly as possible.

However, a current directive restricts the creation of new tables or modifications to existing ones on the platform. The transition to a new platform is due to commence later this summer, and it is anticipated that changes to the Pathway of Care Delays tables can be accommodated in one of the subsequent phases of this rollout.

I am pleased to share that we are seeing some very promising reductions in reducing total days delayed, with April showing a 5% decrease compared to March and, even more notably, there's been a significant reduction of just under 20% compared to April 2024, which is a very positive development

Provide details to the Committee of the timeline for replacing WCCIS with the 'Connecting Care' digital sharing programme.

The Business Case for implementing Connecting Care is currently split into three parts:

- Health element (business case received and under assessment)
- Social Care/Local Authority element (business case received and approved)
- Integrated Care Record (Business case to be developed in a later stage)

The Social Care business case includes the intention to move the 15 local authorities currently on the WCCIS system to new case management systems over a 2-4 year period (2025 - 2027/8).

The business case then extends to 2031/32, to ensure delivery of the broader ambitions for Connecting Care to all 22 local authorities in Wales. This work will include mechanisms to support integrated regional working, developing new data standards and consistent approaches for social care data, staff training etc.

Write to the Committee with information on the situation in Cwm Taf where neighbouring local authorities are not accepting referrals from the Cwm Taf Morgannwg's effective electronic referral system.

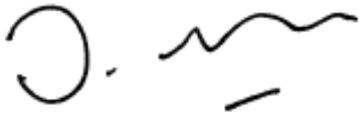
The situation relates to the 'Electronic Transfer of Care' (ETOC) assessment process, which the Health Board introduced across all their hospital sites last year.

The ETOC assessment is prepared by ward staff and quality assured in the Discharge Hub before being issued to local authorities in respect of residents' care needs. This process is well embedded and working well in the region. My officials are liaising with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional team to understand any barriers or challenges that may exist with neighbouring local authorities, which are impacting on the acceptance of the ETOC assessments in other areas.

The new ETOC process is unfamiliar to local authorities outside of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area, and so further work will need to be undertaken to support them in embedding this effective system.

I trust that these updates, along with the written responses to the questions not reached, as set out in Annex A, provide the Committee with the necessary information to address the points raised during the meeting, whilst also reaffirming our ongoing commitment to working collaboratively with Local Government to ensure safe, timely, and efficient discharges from hospitals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Miles', with a stylized flourish.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social
Care

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dawn Bowden', written in a cursive style.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Children and Social Care

Written response by the Welsh Government to the Local Government and Housing Committee on social care challenges that were not reached during the meeting.

Social care data - *There are frustrations about the current lack of social care data. There were comments that a lot of social care data is collected but not available in the public domain. For example, regular data is collected on the length of hospital discharge delays and on waiting times for assessments and care services and staff vacancies, but none of this is published and some stakeholders feel “there is a gap in transparency” – Is the Welsh Government willing to rectify this? And if so, can you give an indication of when more data will be publicly available?*

Welsh Government collects a large amount of data from local authorities on an annual and monthly basis. All the data which is collected annually is published via StatsWales unless there is a concern with the quality or completeness of the data. Annual workforce data is also published by Social Care Wales.

However, we know there is clearly further work required, and we are working alongside local authorities to improve the levels of data available during 2025/26. Local authorities have been provided with additional funding in 2025/26 to continue working with Welsh Government to further deliver social care data requested by Welsh Government and sector partners. In 2025, the published data will be expanded to include all adults in receipt of care and support. This new dataset will allow for an in-depth understanding of the population of adults receiving local authority support.

There is also data collected monthly which is available to stakeholders and Welsh Government staff, but not currently published. This data covers capacity and demand for social care services in local authorities. The data collection was introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic and has changed significantly during that time. Due to the frequency of the data collection, there have been concerns about the robust validation, which is one of the reasons the data is not yet published.

The Committee will be aware that we currently publish the Pathways of Care monthly data on total delays, broken down by total numbers and by individual delay code groups and this can be viewed by health board or local authority region. We will be reviewing the publication details for this year to expand this to include the total days delayed data as well.

Real Living Wage - *Care Forum Wales says the Real Living Wage has “become aspirational” as commissioners say they have not had the funds to maintain those wages – What is the Welsh Government’s response to this?*

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of fair pay and since 2022 we have provided funding through the Local Government Settlement to support our Programme for Government commitment to pay social care workers the Real Living Wage (RLW). The Social Care Fair Work Forum focused on the implementation of the RLW during its first year, and the aspiration was that the RLW should be the minimum that our social care workers are paid.

Paying the RLW is a critical factor in sustaining a reliable workforce, though it is the responsibility of the care commissioners and providers to ensure that this funding is passed on to those it is intended for. We are aware of reports that funding is not reaching all of our social care workers, and we have written to local authorities to work with them, to understand their implementation of the RLW through the allocated funding provided within the Local Government Settlement.

We have also commissioned an independent evaluation of the implementation of the RLW, a first report on which will be published imminently. The evaluation is now focused on the outcomes for the workforce in terms of wellbeing, recruitment, and retention. Early findings from the first report suggests the policy has had a positive impact on the sector, but also recognises the funding is not reaching all of our social care workers.

We will draw on the findings and recommendations from the evaluation, along with feedback from local authorities, to gain a clearer picture of how the RLW is being implemented across Wales in 2025–26.