

# Agenda – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

---

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 4 – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 29 January 2020

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Naomi Stocks

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6222

[SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales)

---

- 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**  
(09.00)
- 2 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill: evidence session 15**  
(09.00–12.00) (Pages 1 – 27)  
Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government  
Claire Germain, Deputy Director Transformation and Partnerships  
Angharad Thomas Richards, Head of Local Government Elections Policy Team  
Lisa James, Deputy Director Local Government Democracy  
Cath Wyatt, Local Government and Elections Bill Manager  
[Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Bill](#)
- 3 Papers to note**  
(12.00–12.05) (Page 28)
  - 3.1 Correspondence from Tai Pawb, CIH Cymru and Shelter Cymru regarding the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill – 16 January 2020**  
(Page 29)
  - 3.2 Correspondence from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Minister for Finance and the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip regarding additional information on the Welsh Government draft budget 2020–21 – 21 January 2020**  
(Pages 30 – 37)



- 3.3 Correspondence from the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding additional information on the Welsh Government draft budget 2020–21 – 21 January 2020**  
(Pages 38 – 42)
- 3.4 Correspondence from Cymorth Cymru, Community Housing Cymru and Welsh Women's Aid regarding the Housing Support Grant and the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2020–21 – 22 January 2020**  
(Page 43)
- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of today's meeting and items 1 and 2 of the meeting on 6 February 2020**  
(12.05)
- 5 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill: consideration of evidence and key issues**  
(12.05–12.30)
- 6 Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill: consideration of draft timetable**  
(12.30) (Pages 44 – 47)

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted

# Agenda Item 3

## Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

29 January 2020 – papers to note cover sheet

Paper no.	Issue	From	Action point
ELGC(5)-04-20 Paper 1	Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill	Tai Pawb, CIH Cymru, Shelter Cymru	To note
ELGC(5)-04-20 Paper 2	Welsh Government Draft Budget 2020-21	Welsh Government	To note
ELGC(5)-04-20 Paper 3	Welsh Government Draft Budget 2020-21	Welsh Government	To note
ELGC(5)-04-20 Paper 4	Welsh Government Draft Budget 2020-21	Cymorth Cymru, Community Housing Cymru, Welsh Women's Aid	To note

**John Griffiths AM**

Chair – Equality, Communities and Local Government Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

Via email to [John.Griffiths@gov.wales](mailto:John.Griffiths@gov.wales)

16 January 2020

Dear John,

We write to you collectively in your capacity as chair of the Equality, Communities and Local Government Committee following our recent joint response to the consultation on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019.

We refer specifically to our campaign on the right to adequate housing in Wales and

- (i) note with gratitude your hosting of the launch of our [feasibility report](#) in June 2019, and
- (ii) recognise and welcome your continued interest in the matter both at plenary and committee level.

You'll likely be aware that the matter of the right to adequate housing has been the subject of a number of questions and debates both in plenary and committee sessions over the past few months and we are pleased that support has been offered from across the political spectrum in the Assembly.

In particular, following discussions with both the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James AM, and Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles AM, we welcome the progress made to date in securing an element of the right to housing – a due regard – as part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019.

It is our current understanding that the due regard duty is proposed as part of the Bill's statutory guidance. Though the Minister has herself stated that local authorities "will have to abide by it", we are strongly of the view that a due regard is best incorporated on the face of the Bill – as a free-standing provision of itself – in order that it is able to work to its maximum effect. We set out this case comprehensively in our joint consultation response and with the insight of Dr Simon Hoffman who authored our original feasibility report.

Furthermore – and more broadly on the full incorporation of the right to adequate housing - we note the Minister's response to the committee in October 2019 in which she referenced a "slide towards" such a right and a commitment to "move in that direction". We continue to make the case that the incorporation of the right to adequate housing in Wales would act as a catalyst for housing supply and resources on the basis of the full right being realised progressively over time.

To that end, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss, in particular, the due regard element of the right to adequate housing and its placement in the Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Alicja Zalesinska, Tai Pawb    Matt Dicks, CIH Cymru    John Puzey, Shelter Cymru

*Enc. – Consultation response, Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019 on behalf of Tai Pawb, CIH Cymru and Shelter Cymru*

# Agenda Item 3.2

**Julie James AM**  
**Minister for Housing and Local Government**

**Rebecca Evans AM**  
**Minister for Finance and Trefnydd**

**Jane Hutt AM**  
**Deputy Minister & Chief Whip**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

**John Griffiths AM**  
**Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee**

21 January 2020

Dear John

Thank you for the invitation to appear before the ELGC Committee on 9 January to provide evidence to the Committee on the 2020-21 Draft Budget. During scrutiny, the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd was asked a number of questions relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Health and Social Services. We are able to confirm that the Minister for Health and Social Services has agreed to write to the Committee on the relevant points.

In addition to this, the Ministers for Housing and Local Government and Education will be writing jointly to both ELCG and CYPE on the issue of teachers' pay and pensions. This letter is currently been drafted and is planned to be sent to both Committees week commencing 20 January 2020.

We received a number of action points following the scrutiny sessions and are pleased to provide the following information in response to the points raised.

## **Population Information**

Over 25% of the settlement is distributed on population projections or estimates. As part of wider statistical work and in response to Office of National Statistics changes, the Welsh Government determined to postpone the 2017-based projections (which were to have been used for Settlement calculations) and to publish 2018-based subnational projections instead. Using the 2018 based sub national population statistics would have made very significant changes to the distribution of the Local Government settlement in a single year.

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

[Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.wales)  
[Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales)  
[Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@gov.wales)

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

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.

**Pack Page 30**

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.

One of the principles behind the work on the settlement formula is the need to support reasonable stability for local authority funding. After considering a number of options the Distribution Sub Group recommended that while the population data set used for the 2019-20 settlement was the 2014-based population projections; for the 2020-21 provisional settlement an average of the 2018 mid-year ONS estimates and the 2014 based local authority projections for 2019 should be used. A two year phasing was agreed.

### **Capital funds available to local authorities to support decarbonisation**

As we discussed at committee there is a specific package of over £140m funding to support decarbonisation and the environment included as part of the budget. This includes £1m for local authorities for ultra-low emission refuse vehicles to fund the difference between replacing with ultra-low emission vehicles, rather than diesel vehicles, for those vehicles due to be replaced in 2020-21. £7.9m is included for Cardiff and Caerphilly councils to support the implementation of measures to bring about urgent compliance with nitrogen dioxide limit values. As part of our aim for a zero emission bus fleet by 2028 we are including £29m capital funding (£21.5m of traditional capital and £7.5m financial transaction capital) in 2020-21 towards delivering an electric bus fleet, to encourage the use of public transport while reducing the carbon emissions and helping improve air quality.

The total capital grants available to local authorities are published as part of the provisional settlement. For 2020-21, including the un-hypothecated general capital grant local authorities will receive over £640m. Whilst there are some allocations specifically for decarbonisation as described above many of these grants support decarbonisation as part of their wider aims. One example of where there is a strong link is the £70m allocated for the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools programme where new buildings are required to have BREEAM (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) excellent rating and major refurbishments are required to have an EPC (Energy Performance Certification) A rating. £70m is also allocated to schemes relating to active travel and local transport schemes, where one of the key aims is to reduce carbon.

In addition those authorities that still hold housing stock will be in receipt of part of the £200m funding for housing quality and social housing grant, which again has a key objective of reducing the carbon footprint of housing.

### **Building Safety programme**

The Building Safety programme is not a single fund for distribution; the £0.5 million revenue funding will support a range of activities that assist the development of building safety policy and longer term legislative reforms. We will bring together expertise from environmental health, building control and fire and rescue services to provide advice and guidance for high rise and high risk residential buildings in Wales.

### **Service Standards for Adaptation Services**

The Service Standards were introduced in April 2019 and have not yet been active for 12 months, it is not possible at this early stage to make an informed observation on how they



have influenced services. The second data collection report will be published shortly (January). The data from the first report is shaping Welsh Government policy and was influential in our decision to commission a review of funding allocations for housing adaptations and the extent they reflect levels of population need for housing adaptations. The results of this research are expected in the summer of 2020.

We should pay tribute to the work done by Care and Repair agencies all over Wales. The funding we provide for aids and adaptations continues to transform the quality of life of the vulnerable adults supported under the programme.

### **Empty Properties**

The allocation of £10m of Financial Transaction Capital for Town Centre Loans will be used to bring empty and underutilised buildings back into use. This funding is part of an overall package at the local authorities' disposal to incentivise property owners to either bring their property back into use or as a preventative measure to stop buildings becoming empty. The loan funding has established good success in those authorities which have an allocation to date. This additional provision will enable Welsh Government to widen the offer to those authorities without an allocation to expand the options available to them during negotiations with empty property owners. This activity particularly relates to recommendation 9, and will be part of a wider provision of support.

### **Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016**

The Minister for Housing and Local Government has committed to amending the 2016 Act prior to its implementation, in order to increase security of tenure in the private rented sector. Subject to the Assembly passing the Bill to make the necessary amendments to the 2016 Act, we expect the Act to be implemented before the end of this Assembly term.

Implementation requires court IT systems to be updated, and the Ministry of Justice has indicated this will entail a cost to the Welsh Government of up to £500,000. The precise cost is subject to ongoing work my officials are undertaking with their counterparts in MoJ and HMCTS. Up to £25,000 of this expenditure may fall in the current financial year. In addition to staff costs, there will also be costs relating to communication, training and development, and evaluation. As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum relating to the 2016 Act, these amount to £140,000 in the first year of implementation, £65,000 in the second year, and £35,000 in the third year.

### **Budget Improvement Plan**

The Budget Improvement Plan sets out how we intend to improve the annual budget process over the next 5 years, including short-term and medium-term milestones.

The purpose of the Plan is to focus on improvements to the budget and related processes (e.g. in relation to tax policy) which support the budget decisions made by Ministers. This means that the Draft and Final Budgets will remain the place where decisions are recorded, with the Plan intended to show the improvements being made in *how* decisions are made.

The Plan will be refined and updated annually, and published alongside the annual draft Budget, to recognise the ongoing nature of driving and sustaining longer-term change. This will include an update on the actions we have taken since the plan was last published and how this has influenced the actions we will take over the subsequent 5 years.

### **Publication of impact assessments**

The Welsh Government expects to make a final decision on the implementation of the joint Committees' recommendation on the publication of all individual impact assessments in a single location when the comprehensive review of our approach has been completed.

This year we have published for the first time a collation of all Ministers' written evidence to Assembly scrutiny committees on allocations within each MEG, which includes considerations of impacts.

We are currently carrying out a comprehensive review and development of our approach to the assessment of impact, which is focused on better understanding the impact our policies have on communities and their environments. As part of this review, digital solutions will be explored which could enable the assessment of impact to be published in a central location.

The review will conclude by summer 2020, at which point the findings and recommendations will be considered and a refreshed approach will begin development, testing and implementation phases. When the review and development phases have concluded we will be in a position to consider all the available evidence to inform a final decision on the publication of all assessment of impact.

### **Chwarae Teg's Phase 2 Report – Deeds Not Words**

Welsh Government's response to recommendations in **Chwarae Teg's Phase 2 report Deeds Not Words** was [published](#) in Cabinet papers ahead of a Cabinet discussion on Welsh Government's Gender Equality Review 4 December 2019.

We have developed the Budget Improvement Plan, published for the first time alongside the annual Budget, to take forward delivery of our planned improvement to our approach to assessing the impact of budget decisions to improve outcomes. This includes work to revisit and clarify purpose of the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) of the budget and the evidence-base underpinning it.

In developing the Plan, we took into account Chwarae Teg's recommendations, and our responses, that relate specifically to budgetary impact assessments.

### **2007 Gender Budgeting Pilot**

This work, initially commissioned by the Welsh Development Agency, has helped us understand the complexities of undertaking gender and other impact assessments and the need to have necessary gender disaggregated data. It also helped inform the subsequent

changes we have made to our approach to assessing the impacts of budget decisions, which has become a more holistic approach based around the use of evidence, evaluation and impact assessment.

This included the steps we took when we were the first UK Administration to publish a comprehensive equality impact assessment of our spending plans alongside our 2011-12 final budget, and contributed to the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment approach we first established in 2015-16.

### **Update from the 2019 Joint Scrutiny Session by ELGC, CYPE and Finance Committees**

Last year the ELGC, CYPE and Finance Committees held a joint scrutiny session on the budget impact assessment process. An updated response to the recommendations made by these committees is as follows:

***Recommendation 1.*** *That the Welsh Government clearly sets out the SIIA process (in greater detail than provided previously), its purpose and expected outcomes, following engagement with and agreement from the relevant statutory commissioners.*

As in previous years we have published a Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) of the 2020-21 of strategic spending decisions in the Budget. We have also engaged with a range of stakeholders to consider how we might improve the way we allocate resources over the longer term, including our approach to how we assess the impact of our Budget decisions. This has shaped development of our Budget Improvement Plan that we published as part of the Draft Budget documentation.

The Minister for Finance and Trefnydd met with each of our four statutory Commissioners and the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the Autumn to hear their views on priority areas for the Budget.

Officials will continue to engage with the commissioners as we continue to review our approach to assessing the impacts of budget decisions into the longer term.

***Recommendation 2.*** *That the Welsh Government publish all of its individual impact assessments to a central location, which can then be referenced by the SIIA.*

We have provided an update on this action above.

***Recommendation 3.*** *That the Welsh Government commission, at the end of this Assembly, a focused piece of work to consider the progress made in relation to SIIAs. This should consider matters such as (but not restricted to) the tool's relative complexity, how the tool has approached the weighting of multiple rights and impacts, and the uses made of the tool's outputs.*

One of the Budget Improvement Plan's work streams is focused on 'Assessing the Impact of Budget Decisions'. Planned future work includes reviewing the approach to the SIIA, as well

as considering the value of commissioning further work to inform future impact assessment of Budget decisions, to determine how a range of considerations can be reflected to develop a robust and transparent approach to impact assessment of spending decisions.

***Recommendation 4.*** *That the Welsh Government commit to using the Well-being of Future Generations Act as a framework for the SIIA. Given our committees' areas of focus, we believe that priority should be given to working with the Children's Commissioner and EHRC to ensure that the legislative requirements in relation to equality and children's rights are fully and effectively reflected in the assessment process.*

Our Budget Improvement Plan includes planned improvements to assessing the impact of budget decisions. In developing these plans, we have taken into account these recommendations, including how we can continue to build on strengthening the SIIA using the Well-being of Future Generations Act as a framework.

Assessment of impacts is also a key element of our approach to policy making and are conducted as part of Welsh Government's ongoing policy development and review. The current Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) requires that children's rights are considered and, as enshrined in Welsh law, the impact on children and young people must be considered whenever we use any of our powers to make a decision.

Our work to review policy making within Welsh Government includes the development of a 'Welsh Government Policy Capability Framework' which has explored the inclusion of a range of attributes including the skills needed to assess impact and the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

We welcome continued engagement with a range of stakeholders to improve how we assess the impact of budget decisions. As set out in the Budget Improvement Plan and as part of the current review and development of Welsh Government's approach to assessing impact we will engage with the Children's Commissioner and the EHRC to consider how we effectively reflect equality and children's rights in our approach.

***Recommendation 5.*** *That the Welsh Government provide an update to the Committees on the outcomes of the November 2018 meeting of the commissioners, and when it is anticipated the research commissioned on the integration of duties will be published.*

The IIA tool was launched in July 2018 and officials attended the Future Generations Commissioner's Advisory Panel in November 2018 to discuss the tool. At the meeting concerns were expressed by some members about the potential dilution of consideration of impact in taking an integrated approach. It was agreed that Welsh Government officials would further engage with the Advisory Panel during the review of the IIA tool. The Welsh Language Commissioner, Children's Commissioner, Older Persons' Commissioner, Future Generations Commissioner and the EHRC will be engaged as part of the current review and development of our approach to assessing impact, as well as other stakeholders.

As referenced above, the review will conclude by the summer of 2020, the recommendations will be considered and a refreshed approach will then begin development, testing and implementation phases.

### **Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment**

We are able to confirm that the SIIA of the Budget is prepared by finance officials, drawing evidence from all Government departments in order to provide a strategic assessment of the whole budget. It is approved by the Minister for Finance on behalf of all Welsh Ministers.

Other Ministers and Deputy Ministers are responsible for ensuring the impact of their policies and proposals in the draft Budget have been considered. In considering the impact of individual policies and budget proposals, the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool is designed to enable and facilitate a more integrated consideration of policy proposals. The evidence gathered through the Integrated Impact Assessments will then inform the SIIA.

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip has portfolio responsibility for equality and human rights, and the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act. Equality, human rights and the WFG Act are considered and taken into account in the development of policies and decisions across the Welsh Government. It is important to highlight that the IIA tool is intended to be a guide to support the development of policy so that when choices are made about a course of action, Welsh Ministers are informed of the potential positive and negative impacts. The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool is therefore a mechanism of providing assurance to Welsh Ministers that all legal and policy considerations are taken into account in the policy process.

We trust that you will find these responses helpful to enable the completion of your scrutiny of the 2020-21 Draft Budget.

Yours sincerely,



**Julie James AM**  
Minister for Housing and  
Local Government



**Rebecca Evans AM**  
Minister for Finance and  
Trefnydd



**Jane Hutt AM**  
Deputy Minister & Chief  
Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/VG/0208/20

John Griffiths AM  
Chair Equality, Local Government & Communities Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

21 January 2020

Dear John,

I refer to your request to provide information in respect of action points raised at the Equality, Local Government & Communities Committee Draft Budget session on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Please find below my response in relation to those issues which fall under my remit as Minister for Health and Social Services.

**How the disparity in pay, terms and conditions and status between social care/services staff employed within the NHS and those in local authorities will be addressed; and what other actions will be taken to improve employment conditions and quality of work for local authority employed staff in the social care/services sector**

We acknowledge that there is a difference between local government and NHS salaries for some workers. However it is also worth noting that job packages are made up of different terms and conditions beyond pay.

Recruitment and retention is a challenge across the whole of the social care workforce and this is why we are looking at how we can improve terms and conditions across this sector.

For example, following the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission last year, we are taking steps to establish a Fair Work Forum in Social Care. We will be looking closely at the outcome of our recent consultations on social partnership, and the socio-economic duty, and have been engaging with partners in the sector about the priorities for a Fair Work Forum.

In relation to social workers, Social Care Wales is talking with sector leads about the modern role of a social worker, and opportunities for post qualifying learning and development which forms part of the wider package of terms and conditions for social work.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@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.

## **Social Workers**

There are a range of different organisations that employ social workers, including third sector, local authorities, and some independents as well as the NHS. These employers will recruit to different pay scales, for example CAF/CASS Cymru recruit social workers to civil service pay scales. This means that there are differences in terms of the terms and conditions of social workers across Wales. We have been engaging with partners such as BASW and Social Care Wales to consider if action is needed to address this and if so what this should look like. For example, whether there is a need for a national pay scale and career framework, or how local differences might be reflected.

## **Occupational Therapists**

Salaries for occupational therapists employed in local government are different to those in the NHS. The NHS uses Agenda for Change and local government job evaluation sets salaries in individual local authorities. Traditionally new professionals (just graduating) might find that their starting salary is higher in local government, but as they progress the NHS salary passes them.

There have been issues (Swansea is an example) of joint teams consisting of occupational therapists employed to do the same job, where the staff employed by the NHS are paid more than the staff employed by the local authority to undertake the same work. This is a problem and is usually resolved by dissatisfied staff changing their employer.

However, the terms and conditions for any job are not limited to pay. The local government hours, annual leave allowance, flexible working policy etc. may all be different and some occupational therapists will accept a role with a lower pay scale if the other job benefits suit them better. Many occupational therapists in social care prefer the philosophy and model of working and this outweighs pay differences.

Ensuring that staff feel valued and see their role as of importance is also about the sense of impact and effectiveness, so good management and support and the ability (empowerment) to deliver their interventions to the top of the professional 'licence' also need to be taken into account and may contribute more to someone seeing their job as a very positive career of choice beyond a simple pay comparison.

## **How the Minister expects the increase in the Social Care Workforce and Sustainability Pressures Grant to be used and the desired outcomes**

The increase in this grant in 2020-21 reflects increasing pressures facing the sector. These include, for example, uplifts to the national living wage.

We have responded to the pressures that local government has raised in relation to the social care workforce. These pressures can result in additional costs and adversely impact the continuity of care. These include increases in the national living wage, employer contributions and pension costs, as well as wider challenges resulting from high turnover rates, a reliance on agency staff and the need to support the workforce's continued professional development to deliver increasingly complex care.

Whilst workforce pressures are intrinsically linked to the wider sustainability of the sector they are not the only challenge it faces, so this additional funding is also intended to help local authorities respond to service pressures and to be better positioned to manage unexpected or increased demands. This will facilitate a greater focus on prevention and

early intervention. It recognises local authorities' calls for a 'double funding of investment' to support a greater emphasis on preventative work, whilst delivering current service provision.

We have received interim reports for 2019-20 setting out how local authorities have used the funding. These reports show that the funding is being used to tackle a range of different challenges across social care. The mid-year reports show that local authorities have used the funding to support delivery of a range of different services, for example:

- 11 local authorities have used a portion of their funding to increase wages across the sector. For example, Rhondda Cynon Taff has used the funding to target an uplift aimed at the Foundation Living Wage commitment for the Council's external domiciliary care providers.
- Nine local authorities have utilised the funding to support Adult and Older People's Services, in particular, residential home placements. For example, Pembrokeshire County Council has used the grant to offset increased pressures within the short term respite budgets.
- Eight local authorities have utilised the funding to support domiciliary care for older people,
- One local authority has funded support for maintaining business continuity of its core out-of-hours service.

We have provided local authorities with a degree of flexibility around how the grant funding can be used in relation to social care workforce pressures and sustainable services. This is because local authorities are best placed to understand local needs and how to achieve maximum benefit from the funding.

To maximise the reach of this funding administrative arrangements associated with the grant are light touch. However we have set high level parameters for how the funding should be spent and will ask local authorities to confirm how they intend to use the funding before payments are made.

This grant funding forms just one part of our wider support for the sector which includes, for example, funding the Social Care Wales WeCare. Wales campaign, which aims to attract more people to work in the sector and promoting professionalisation of the sector through registration of the workforce.

### **Whether the allocation of £2.3million as a specific grant to the Adoption Service is adequate, and how will this additional money lead to improved outcomes?**

This investment is being used to transform the adoption support 'offer' in Wales and is also being creatively used to match fund other resources to ensure widest reach. It is intended that this 'Core Offer' will:

- equip adoptive families at the start and support their early days to encourage healthy and confident families;
- provide effective information, advice or support as and when families need it and in a timely way so any issues that arise are less likely to escalate into more serious issues; and
- provide ongoing support or easy re-entry to services where it is needed.

New and Innovative services are being developed through this funding, many in partnership with the Welsh Voluntary Adoption Agencies for example TESSA, Adopting Together and Connected (a service for adopted children and young people).



- TESSA (Therapy, Education & Support Services in Adoption), a UK wide Lottery funded service is being rolled out across Wales; utilising match funding from this investment to provide wider reach in Wales. Based on delivery through paid parent-partners (experienced and trained adopters) it incorporates an expert psychology assessment and a 6 week course (based on a successful service provided by one Health Board in Wales), plus access to other recommended support services. It remains low cost, early take up is good and is being academically evaluated. When it is fully functional it will provide a services to circa 200 adoptive families in Wales at any one time. The services started taking referrals in November and 18 families are already accessing it.
- The 'Connected' service is the only specialist resource for adopted children and young people in Wales (replaced Talk Adoption). The investment is being used to ensure that it is available in all parts of Wales and also complemented by an advice and Information service provided for adopted C&YP in similar ways to that for non-adopted C&YP and a young adopted adults ambassador scheme provides mechanisms for consultation engagement and promotion of adoption. 100 C&YP were offered transfer to new service and 70 C&YP currently registered and receiving service while it is grown. A national development officer has been appointed as have 4 out 5 regional officers. Scoping for national adopted C&YP advice and information offer has commenced and the young adopted adult ambassador scheme commenced with 3 recruited so far.

The investment is also being used to change and improve practice across Wales. The National Adoption Service has commissioned AFA Cymru to work with the sector to develop new best practice approaches to the following:

- placing children and providing early support (including Adopting Together
- contact which is effectively facilitated by regional services / agencies;
- adoption support assessment, planning and review for all children; and
- working with birth parents including links to Reflect projects

### **How the Welsh Government is monitoring delivery of the requirements set out by the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014?**

Welsh Government has put a range of steps in place to ensure that the delivery of the Social Services and Well-Being Act is carefully monitored and to ensure that the impact of the Act on the well-being outcomes of people who need care and support and carers who need support can be measured.

Firstly, a formal evaluation of the Act has been commissioned and is being led by the University of South Wales. The formal evaluation is exploring two areas - the implementation of the Act and the impact of the Act. Fieldwork is currently underway on the implementation of the Act and an initial report on this is due to be published in July 2020. The full and final report covering both the implementation and the impact of the Act will be published at the end of 2021.

Secondly, the Measuring the Mountain project is now in its second year and is exploring in depth people's experiences of care and support and carer's experiences of support. Measuring the Mountain is being delivered by a consortium of stakeholders, including Social Care Wales, the University of South Wales and ONS. The Measuring the Mountain project uses Sensemaker technology so that people and carers can share their experiences in detail enabling a wide range of stories to be collected and analysed. Measuring the Mountain also uses Citizen Jury methodologies which, again, allows in depth scrutiny of

people's experiences of the Act. The phase 1 Measuring the Mountain report was published in April 2019. Phase 2 of the project is currently underway and the second and final Measuring the Mountain report is due at the end of 2020.

Thirdly and finally, a new Performance and Improvement Framework will be launched on 1 April 2020 which will change the way the local authorities monitor their performance in relation to the Act. The new Performance and Improvement Framework will require local authorities to collect a range of data that will include quantitative data and qualitative data, and will also require them to engage with and use research and evidence. This will enable Welsh Government and local authorities to better understand people's experiences of the Act and to accurately measure how local authorities are contributing to improving the well-being outcomes of people who need care and carers who need support. It will also increase the quality and the consistency of the data that is gathered by local authorities.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Vaughan Gething AC/AM**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Dear Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee Members,

### Welsh Government budget 2020/21: Housing Support Grant

In early December Cymorth Cymru, Community Housing Cymru and Welsh Women's Aid published our joint report '[Housing Matters](#)' which called for the Housing Support Grant to be increased in the Welsh Government's budget for 2020/21.

The Housing Support Grant is the Welsh Government's principal funding stream for preventing homelessness and supporting independent living. Every year it helps more than 60,000 people to avoid homelessness, escape violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, live in their own homes and thrive in their communities.

**As you will be aware, the Welsh Government's draft budget revealed that the Housing Support Grant has been allocated the same amount of funding as last year.**

Local authorities, third sector support providers and social landlords have worked incredibly hard over the past few years to make savings within their services. Costs of delivery have grown, mainly due to inflation and complexity of demand, but funding has not. **In fact, the budget has faced real terms cuts of over £37million since 2012.** This is set against a backdrop of increased homelessness and people presenting with a more challenging combination of co-occurring issues such as mental health problems, substance use problems and the impact of trauma.

Our members are telling us that services have now reached a tipping point - and a cash flat settlement in 2020/21 will not be enough to achieve the shared ambitions of Welsh Government, landlords and support providers.

**In your scrutiny of the draft budget we urge you to raise this issue with Ministers and advocate for additional funding from the UK Government's budget in March to be allocated to the Housing Support Grant.** This will enable services to be better equipped to prevent homelessness and support more people to live safely and independently in their own homes. We have really appreciated the support shown by members of all parties in recent years and hope that you can continue to do so through committee scrutiny, oral questions, letters to Ministers and the draft budget debate on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

Please get in touch if you would like more information about the Housing Support Grant or services in your constituency/region. We would also be very happy to meet with you or your support staff to discuss this issue further.

Kind regards,

**Katie Dalton**  
Director  
Cymorth Cymru

**Stuart Ropke**  
Chief Executive  
Community Housing Cymru

**Eleri Butler**  
Chief Executive  
Welsh Women's Aid

# Agenda Item 6

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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted