

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

John Griffiths MS
Local Government and Housing Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
CF99 1SN

26 January 2022

Dear John,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee in respect of the 2022-23 Draft Budget. During my session on 21 January, I undertook to provide the following information:

A note on the reasons why many ethnic minority parents have presented themselves as homeless to local authorities

Paragraph 36 of the Strategic Impact Assessment of the Draft Budget, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants report referred to highlights impacts of the pandemic across the UK on ethnic minority children if their parents do not have access to public funds. It is a UK report and states that across the UK, because many temporary housing arrangements offered by friends or community members were withdrawn during lockdown, many ethnic minority parents then presented as homeless to local authorities.

In Wales, however, we have taken an inclusive approach and I have been clear that during the pandemic and the public health emergency, local authorities should rely on their alternative powers to provide temporary accommodation for those who do not have access to public funds. As the pandemic is ongoing, our approach remains unchanged. However, in the longer term we will be limited by UK Government immigration rules in the support we can offer.

More broadly, as the Committee will know, there is a strong link between poverty and socio-economic disadvantage and inequality in accessing appropriate homes by some ethnic minority people. Measures to address this are set out in the [Ending Homelessness Action Plan](#) which we published on 30 November 2021. The Plan uses the devolved levers we have in Wales, but many of the levers around reducing poverty lie with the UK government of course.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@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.

The Committee will wish to note that we continue to explore options to ensure those with No Recourse to Public Funds restrictions, but with valid grounds to appeal or lodge decisions, are supported to access shelter and legal advice to put together their case after the pandemic. We are currently funding a consortium of third sector organisations, led by Housing Justice Cymru, to try to expand informal hosting opportunities and other temporary shelter arrangements to ensure there is not a cliff-edge in support when our public health measures come to an end.

We will shortly publish guidance and commission training for local authorities on migrant rights and entitlements to support, to try to prevent migrants being incorrectly turned away - either because they have secure immigration status but cannot prove it, such as happened with the Windrush Generation, and which may conceivably happen for EU Citizens in the coming months – or because local authorities incorrectly interpret the meaning of ‘Public Funds’ when considering if they can support someone. ‘Public Funds’ has a very specific meaning in the Immigration Rules and there is almost always some action local authorities can take to offer support to someone who is destitute and in need of help, within the confines of the law.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS

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