

## **Information from Llamau regarding the Welsh Government White Paper on Ending Homelessness in Wales**

Llamau are in favour of the total removal of priority need, but recognise this could have unintended consequences for those people already in or about to go into the proposed 'exemption' groups.

The proposed abolition of the "priority need" test can potentially have negative implications for care leavers and care-experienced children. Here are some potential issues that require further consideration:-

1. **Increased Competition for Limited Housing:** Abolishing the priority need test may lead to increased competition for limited housing resources. Care leavers and care-experienced children, who may already face challenges in securing stable accommodation, could face additional difficulties if there is heightened demand for housing.
2. **Potential Delay in Housing Assistance:** With the removal of the priority need test, there might be a need for a lead-in time for the new system to take effect. During this period, care leavers and care-experienced individuals may experience delays in accessing housing assistance, which could contribute to their vulnerability.
3. **Specific Vulnerabilities of Care Leavers:** Care leavers often face unique challenges, including the transition to independent living without family support. The removal of the priority need test should be accompanied by measures to address the specific vulnerabilities of care leavers, ensuring they receive the necessary support during the transition to independent living.
4. **Impact on Homelessness Prevention:** The priority need test serves as a mechanism to identify and prioritize vulnerable individuals at risk of homelessness. Its removal may impact the effectiveness of homelessness prevention efforts, particularly for care leavers who may be at a higher risk of housing instability.
5. **Need for Adequate Support Services:** As part of the broader strategy, it's crucial to ensure that care leavers have access to support services that address their unique needs. This includes mental health support, education and employment assistance, and other services that contribute to their overall well-being and housing stability.
6. **Resource Allocation:** Local authorities will still need to manage their resources effectively and determine how individuals, including care leavers, are prioritized for housing allocations. Clear guidance and policies should be in place to ensure fair and transparent resource allocation that considers the specific needs of care leavers.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation: The impact of the abolition of the priority need test on care leavers should be closely monitored and evaluated. This includes assessing whether care leavers are disproportionately affected, and if so, adjustments to the system may be necessary to address any unintended consequences.

As you can see, our main concerns, whilst supporting the principle, is, without significant allocation of resources, young people who are care experienced may see reduced support as the expansion of priority need occurs. We are also concerned the proposals are not robust enough and may see a variation in how the guidance is used in practice.