

Llamau additional evidence to Local Government and Housing Committee

- **(Cross-sector working) Is there any good practice in relation to service users who may be too complex for traditional housing support because of their long-term health and social care needs?**

Llamau regularly works in partnership with Housing/Homelessness and Children's Services Departments within the commissioning local authority to provide a multi-agency approach to supporting and housing a young person who has complex support needs. This may include:

- Double staffing paid for by Children's Services
- Regular multi-agency meetings which include other statutory providers such as health and YOS or Probation.
- Formulation meetings with health board psychologists to support the team in how to best support the individual young person e.g. Enfys Team in Cardiff and Vale Health Board.

In both Cardiff and the Vale, we also provide supported accommodation with a very small number of bedspaces to allow us to work with a young person who, due to a range of complex issues, may struggle to live in a slightly larger supported accommodation. In the Vale we operate a 2 bed supported housing project and in Cardiff a 3 bed service, both of which have very successfully supported young people when their social workers said would never it expected to work. These young people have been supported to manage for example, complex physical and mental health issues; had young children returned to their care, reduce and then cease significant substance misuse etc. These small projects are more costly to run because there are a smaller number of bedspaces, but they have produced long term outcomes for the young people housed there which have saved hundreds of thousands of pounds to the public purse longer term.

- **What should the future of housing support look like?**
 - **Ring fence is retained:** HSG is an essential funding stream which helps reduce homelessness across Wales. Keeping the ring fence is vital. HSG is commissioned via local authorities, ensuring services are strategically relevant, are regularly audited and meet minimum standards. In England, where the ring-fence was removed a number of years ago, services disappeared and rogue and unregulated providers exploited people needing support.
 - **Properly funded:** We cannot emphasise enough the importance of retaining the ring-fence for HSG and to ensure inflationary uplifts happen yearly to both continue to pay RLW, but also to enable appropriate full cost recovery for services. Many providers are effectively subsidising local authorities by providing services that don't cover full

costs. With two inflationary uplifts in the last two years, it does appear that there is a long-term future for housing support. Enabling housing support to be available to those who need it is crucial for reducing repeat homelessness and for preventing homelessness. Recognising the importance of a well-paid and skilled workforce is vital to ensure improvements in recruitment and retention. Real Living Wage should be protected.

- **Longer contracts:** Having longer contracts helps job security but these need to have inflationary uplifts built into them. Contracts need to cover costs for areas such as appropriate line management; governance; training; reflective practice and 'systems' (digital case management).
- **Focus on prevention and support:** Early identification, intervention and prevention services must be funded alongside crisis support services in order to ensure reduce homelessness long term. We are seeing prevention services cut to fund crisis services as there as so many people presenting as homeless. We believe this is short-sighted. The numbers of people presenting as homeless will never reduce if prevention services are cut. Both need properly funding.
- **Mixed range of services:** There has to be a range of support services to meet the needs of everyone needing support, put simply, one size does not fit all. This includes funding smaller sized supported housing projects for people who need more intensive support. While these may be more expensive because of their size, the outcomes are very positive and have long lasting impact.
- HSG is for people who are aged 16 and over. Research shows nearly 50% of adults who were rough sleeping, first experienced homelessness before the age of 21, with a shocking 73% experiencing homelessness more than once. Services like family mediation and advice are essential for preventing homelessness before it escalates. A proactive, preventative approach is key to tackling homelessness sustainably. HSG guidance only allows funding to be allocated for services working with people aged 16 and over. This means mediation and Upstream programmes that work with younger ages cannot be funded via HSG. This leads to a funding vacuum for prevention services working with school age children and young people.
- **The Welsh Government says it wants Housing First to be the default approach for people with high levels of support need. How far away are we from that, and what barriers need to be overcome?**

- For certain groups, Housing First may not be the appropriate approach. For example, young people who are homeless and young people who are care leavers often lack both the independent living skills to live on their own successfully and often have other support needs which means specialist supported accommodation is more appropriate and also proven to have long reaching and sustainable outcomes. Young people particularly often struggle with isolation if moved into their own accommodation, without the necessary support and are more vulnerable to having a lack of control over their front door and their accommodation being used for 'cuckooing'. Women experiencing VAWDASV who cannot remain at home with target hardening and other support, may still need refuge space to ensure safety etc.
- We deliver very successful Housing First 4 Youth services in a number of areas, which particularly work well in supporting older young people who are in danger of entrenched homelessness.

The main barriers for increasing Housing First include:

- Lack of affordable housing/housing supply
- Lack of will from some RSLs to support Housing First services
- Lack of true multi-agency working or multi-agency work stalling when key individuals change roles.
- Lack of engagement from Health