

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ending Homelessness in Wales

Tell us what you think about changes we plan to
make to the law

This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an
easy read version of '**Consultation on the White Paper on Ending
Homelessness in Wales**'.

October 2023

How to use this document



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Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 32**.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

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What this report is about



In 2014 a law came out called **Housing (Wales) Act 2014**.



This law says how housing and homelessness services should be run.



Homelessness means you do not have a home to live in.



Housing and homelessness services support people to find and get homes when they need help.



This law has helped to stop people becoming homeless.



We think the law needs some changes to help people more.



In the future we will need to look at making changes to guidance to make things honest and open to people.

In this report we talk about these things:



- Changing the law about homelessness.
- What services in Wales can do to help stop homelessness.
- Work to stop people becoming homeless.
- Access to housing. This means being able to find, get and pay for a home.
- How the changes will be done.



A group was set up to look at these issues. They are called the **Expert Review Panel**.



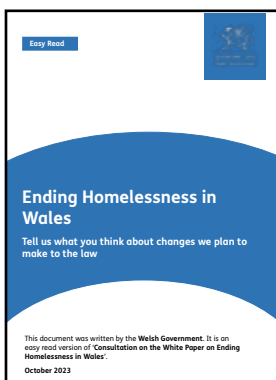
The Panel has worked with us to make this report.



We asked for the views of many people across Wales from different backgrounds. Including over 350 people who have been homeless.



We want to know what you think of our ideas in this report.



Please read this booklet and then answer the questions at the end. For more information check our website: <https://www.gov.wales/ending-homelessness-white-paper>

Why we want to make changes now



A lot has changed since the law started in 2014. For example, COVID-19 and the higher cost of things like food and heating.



We want to stop homelessness in Wales.

When we cannot stop homelessness happening, we want to make sure it:



- only lasts for a short time
- does not happen again and
- does not happen often.



We need to do more to stop homelessness and to help people early on.



We also need to use less **temporary housing**. This is when people stay in housing for a short time until they find permanent housing.



Using less **temporary housing** is called **Rapid Rehousing**.



People need to get permanent housing as soon as possible. Also, the home needs to be right for their needs.

What the changes will mean for homelessness in Wales

The changes will mean:



- Being homeless is not common. It only lasts for a short time when it does happen, and it does not happen again.



- People who are homeless experience less **trauma**.



Trauma is when you have experienced something that causes you to feel bad for a long time.



Homelessness causes a lot of stress for people. This must be thought about when supporting people.



The changes will mean:

- People get a permanent home faster.



- All public services must work harder to stop homelessness.

- People get help earlier to stop them becoming homeless.



- Local housing services think more about people's needs and put people first.



- Services are easier to use, and they work together more.

- Temporary housing is made better.



- We use **social housing** and other options more. **Social housing** is housing owned by the council or a housing association.



- We do more to improve the experience of people using homelessness services.

What we want to change

Some of the main changes we want to make are:

1. Changes to the main homelessness law

We want to help people earlier. This includes:



- People who are likely to become homeless within 6 months.



- People who have received a **Notice Seeking Possession**. This is a letter saying they must leave their home.



This means people will get help sooner, before things get very bad.

The problems and what we want to change



There are not enough homes for people in Wales. We need to do more work with councils and others to change this.



More people are needing help to stop becoming homeless. This is a big reason why we need to make changes.



The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 helped a lot with homelessness in Wales. But there have still been problems.



It does not do enough to make sure people get help early on.



It has also been hard to collect information about homelessness.



There has not been enough in the law to help councils stop homelessness from happening.



The law has not done enough to make sure people can get the right help for their needs.



The law has not helped enough single people and people who live on the street.



Councils only have to help people with certain needs. This means many people became street homeless because they could not get help.



More people are homeless now than when the law started in 2014.



But the number of people helped has stayed the same.



Also, when people are homeless, they often have other problems at the same time. For example, mental health problems. This means they need different kinds of support at the same time.



We want the local housing authority to make a Personal Housing Plan for each person or family. The plan shows the steps they are taking to find a home for them.



They should make the plan with the people involved based on their needs.



The plan should be checked every 8 weeks.



The plan should include what the person wants for their home.



People should be allowed to ask for a check on what is being done and how good the home offered is.



The law now says a person must have a **priority need** to get help. For example, someone has a **priority need** if they have a health condition which makes them vulnerable.



We want to take away this rule and make sure everyone can get help when they might become homeless.



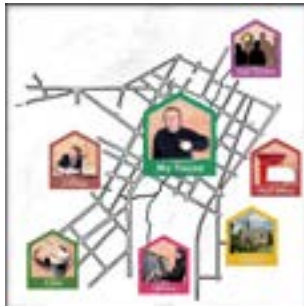
There is also a rule called **intentionality**. This means it might be the person's own fault that they have had to leave their home.



This can change the kind of help a council must give the person or not.



We want to take away this part of the law.



Local connection is another rule. This means that a council only needs to find a home for someone in a certain area if they are from there or have links there.



We want to change this so that councils can be more flexible. For example, if someone is in danger if they stay in their own area.



We also want to make sure people get the help they need to keep their home.



Sometimes it may not be possible to work with people but we want councils to be understanding about a person's needs.



We want to change the law so that councils can decide to stop working with people when:

- They threaten staff.
- They keep missing appointments.



If this happens the council must tell the person and give them a chance to explain.



We want to change how we talk to people who might become homeless.



We want to make sure that we talk to people in a way that they understand and meets their needs.



For example, for someone with a learning disability, this could be giving them Easy Read information.

2. Changes to what public services must do to stop homelessness



It is important that organisations work together to make sure people get the help they need.



We want to make sure we look after the wellbeing of people who:

- might become homeless
- and who are homeless.



To do this we need more public services, like social services, to work better with housing services to help someone keep their home.



This also means that we need to make sure public services understand the problems people have and know what to do.



They will need to tell councils that someone might become homeless.

3. Work to stop homelessness



Some groups of people are more likely to be homeless than others.



We want to make sure that we give people the help they need.



We need to think about how some groups of people are affected by homelessness. For example:

- Children and young people
- People with mental health problems
- People leaving hospital
- People being abused
- Disabled people
- People leaving prison
- **Veterans**



Veteran is an ex-member of armed forces.

Children and Young people



We think that social services and homelessness services should work together better when 16 and 17 year olds might become homeless.



They should also not be placed in unsupported, temporary housing.



Children and young people who are **care experienced** are more at risk of being homeless.



Care experienced is a person who has been provided a place to live or stay by social services for 1 day or more, before their 18th birthday.



According to Public Health Wales, more than 1 in 4 young homeless people have been in care.



We think social services and local authorities need to work together to help children, young people and care experienced young people.

Mental health



Mental health problems can make someone more likely to become homeless.



Homelessness can also cause mental health problems.



We think health services and councils need to work together better to help people with mental health problems.

Housing services also need to understand more about mental health.



Some people who become homeless use drugs or alcohol. Sometimes, this can be related to mental health.

Leaving hospital



Sometimes people become homeless when they leave hospital.



We think that when someone leaves hospital, the hospital should check if they have a home.

We think that the council should help people who might become homeless when they are leaving hospital.

Abuse



Homelessness can happen because of **domestic abuse**. This is when a partner or family member is harming someone.



We want to help more people in this area. For example, people who are being controlled or being abused in other ways.

Disabled people



We want to make sure that homelessness services meet the needs of disabled people.



There are many disabled people in temporary housing. People can become disabled if their health gets worse.



Disabled people are also waiting a long time for homes that meet their needs.



We think all councils need to keep a list of accessible housing.



Accessible housing means disabled people can access and use the home. For example, it has ramps, rails, and light switches at a height a disabled person can reach.

Leaving prison



We need to make changes to help stop people coming out of prison becoming homeless.



The prisoner should be checked when they go into prison to see if they will lose their home.



This will help get ready for when they come out and make sure they get help sooner.



If a prisoner might become homeless within 6 months, the prison should tell the council.



Prisons should find out if the prisoner is likely to lose their home while in prison.

Veterans



Sometimes people may become homeless when they:

- are discharged from the armed forces or
- sometime after leaving the army.



Veterans and their families face many other challenges when it comes to homelessness system.



We want to review the guidance - National Housing Pathway for ex-member of armed forces. We want to make sure the rules are followed across all local authorities.

4. Access to housing



There are not enough homes. This puts pressure on **temporary housing**.



Temporary housing needs to be better, but we know this will take time.



We think the law needs to be better. To make sure that housing is safe and healthy for people.



People should not have to share sleeping space in temporary homes.



We think that no one under the age of 25 should be placed in temporary homes that does not have support.



We think that when people are offered a permanent home, it should be in their area. It should be close enough to go to the things that person needs. For example, work and schools.



Social housing is housing owned by the council, community landlords and housing associations. These are called **Registered Social Landlords**.



Social housing means housing that is affordable. It is not there to make money for the landlord.



Social Landlords need to work together more to stop homelessness. For example, this would mean housing associations have to do more to find homes for people who are homeless.



Housing waiting lists are very long. Not everyone on the lists need a home. They are already living in a suitable home.

This can make it hard to manage housing waiting lists.



We think councils should be able to take people who do not need a home off waiting lists.



At the moment, councils must help someone who is homeless up until they have been offered a suitable home.



We would like councils to continue to work with people who need extra help to stay in their homes.



The person would need to be happy with the housing option, and it must be available for at least 12 months.

Making the changes



Some organisations have the power to manage housing and homelessness by law.



For example, councils have many powers to manage homelessness services.



The **Public Service Ombudsman for Wales** deals with complaints made about councils.



Welsh Ministers have some powers by law.



Care Inspectorate Wales have some powers by law over places that provide care.



We think these things should continue. But we want to make sure they consider homelessness more carefully in the future.



We must make sure that we keep listening to what homeless people and people who have been homeless think.



We need to be able to get better information from councils about homelessness.



This would help us understand the problems better and the progress made.

Hard words

Accessible housing

This means disabled people can access and use the home. For example, it has ramps, rails and light switches at a height a disabled person can reach.

Care experienced

Care experienced is a person who has been provided a place to live or stay by social services for 1 day or more, before their 18th birthday.

Trauma

Trauma is when you have experienced something that causes you to feel bad for a long time.

Questions



Please read this booklet and then answer the questions.



You should send us your answers by **16 January 2024**.



You can fill this form in on your computer and email it to:

HomelessnessLegislationReform@gov.wales



Or print it and post it to:

Homelessness Prevention Legislation Team

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ



1. What do you think about the changes we want to make?



2. Is there anything you do not like about the changes?



3. Is there anything we have missed?